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# The Mormon Battalion

## ITS HISTORY AND ACHIEVEMENTS

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By

B. H. ROBERTS

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1919

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# The Mormon Battalion

## I.

## THE MARCH OF THE BATTALION COMPARED WITH OTHER HISTORICAL MARCHES.

"The Lieutenant-Colonel commanding congratulates the Battalion on their safe arrival on the shores of the Pacific ocean, and the conclusion of their march of over two thousand miles. History will be searched in vain for an equal march of infantry."

So wrote Lieutenant-Colonel P. St. George Cooke in "Order No. I," from "Head Quarters Mormon Battalion, Mission of San Diego", under date of January 30th, 1847. If Col. Cooke is accurate in his statement—and one has a right to assume that he is, since he was a graduate of the United States Military academy of West Point, and hence versed in the history of such military incidents —then the march of this Battalion is a very wonderful performance. For if history might be searched in vain for an equal march of infantry when Col. Cooke wrote his "Order No. I," then certainly no march of infantry since that time has equaled it.

The only other historical marches that are comparable with the Mormon Battalions' march are Xenophon's and Doniphan's, the former in ancient, the latter in modern times.

**"Retreat of the Ten Thousand."**—Xenophon's march is commonly known as the "Retreat of the Ten Thou-

sand," 401 B. C. The account of the "Retreat" is given in Xenophon's Anabasis. About fourteen thousand Greek soldiers under a Spartan leader named Clearchus entered the service of a Persian prince, Cyrus, surnamed the younger, brother of the then reigning King of Persia, Artaxerxes II. The purpose of Cyrus was to deprive his brother of the throne of Persia, and reign in his stead. The expedition marched through Asia Minor to Cunaxa, near old Babylon, where an army of 900,000 Persians engaged the army of Cyrus, which, with his Greek auxiliaries number but 300,000. The smaller army was really successful in the battle, but a rash attempt on the part of Cyrus to slay his brother during the engagement—in which he himself was killed—changed the fortunes of the day, the expedition ended in failure and hence the retreat of the Greek ten thousand up the valley of the Tigris, through Armenia to Trebizond, a Greek city on the Euxine—our modern Black Sea.

This march of Greek infantry though attended with almost incredible hardships from cold, hunger, and the assaults of enemies, was not equal to the march of the Mormon Battalion for the reason that it covered but fifteen hundred miles, as against the two thousand miles covered by the Battalion. While the Greek infantry in their retreat numbered more men than the Battalion, and fought many battles, their march was, for the most part, through settled lands and along well defined roads, while the greater part of the Battalion's march was through desert lands; and four hundred and seventy-four miles of it through trackless deserts where nothing but savages and wild beasts were found, "or deserts where, for want of water, there was no living creature."[a]

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[a]See Cooke's Wagon Road Map for this part of the route.

**Doniphan's Expedition into Mexico.**—Doniphan's march occurred in the same year, and in the same war in which the Battalion served—the war with Mexico, 1846. The march is known as Doniphan's Expedition into Mexico. The expedition started from Santa Fe and marched to Matamoras, near where the Rio Grande empties into the Gulf of Mexico—a distance of about thirteen or fourteen hundred miles.[b] The march was via El Paso, Chihuahua, Parras, Saltillo and Monterey, thence to Matamoras. Here the expedition embarked for New Orleans, where the men were mustered out of service. The important battles of Brazito and Sacramento were fought enroute, the former placing El Paso, and the latter the city of Chihuahua—capital of the state of the same name—in the hands of the Americans. The expedition numbered about nine hundred men, mostly from Missouri, and under the command of Col. Alexander W. Doniphan of that state, and returned to Missouri via the Gulf of Mexico and the Mississippi.

The march overland it will be observed was less than that of the Battalion's. For the most part, moreover, Doniphan's march was through a settled country, and over roads long used between Santa Fe and points in northern and central Mexico. Besides, the Expedition was not exclusively made up of infantry, being mixed cavalry and infantry, and therefore would not strictly come in competition with the Battalion which was en-

[b]I am aware that the historian of "Doniphan's Expedition"—William E. Connelley, credits the expedition with a grand circuit of 5,500 miles, 2,500 miles of which he states was by water, leaving a distance of 3,500 miles by land; but he accounts the expedition as starting from Independence, Mo., and returning to it. Whereas the expedition was organized and began its great march at Santa Fe, and ended at Matamoras, where it embarked for home.

tirely of infantry, with accompanying baggage wagons. Doniphan's Expedition is so wonderful a performance, however, and has been so generously acclaimed, that if unmentioned in connection with the performance of the Battalion, and the contrast made as above, it might be thought by some to rival the march of the latter. This, however, is not the case.

**The World's Record for a March of Infantry.**—Not even in the World's Great War, now happily ended, has the Mormon Battalion's march been equaled, though in all other things that war has surpassed the previous war experiences of mankind. And since the Battalion's march has not been equaled by any march of infantry in the World's Great War, nor in ancient times, it is not likely now, owing to the new methods for the transportation of troops that have been developed, that the Mormon Battalion's march across more than half of the North American continent will ever be equaled. It will stand as the world's record for a march of infantry.

## II.

## THE CALL OF THE BATTALION.

The Mormon Battalion owes its existence to the exodus of the Mormon people from the state of Illinois to the then (1846) little known region of the Rocky Mountain west. The leaders of that people had decided that there was little prospect of their being able to live in peace with their neighbors in Illinois, or in any of the surrounding states, owing to the existence of strong prejudices against their religion, and therefore they resolved upon seeking a new home in the west—"within the Basin of the Great Salt Lake, or Bear River Valley * * * believing that to be a point where a good living will require hard labor, and consequently will be coveted by no other people, while it is surrounded by so unpopulous but fertile a country."[a]

**The Mormon Appeal to the United States Government for Help.**—Before the exodus from Illinois began, as early as the 20th of January (1846), the high council at Nauvoo made public announcement of the intention of the Mormon people to move to "some good valley of the Rocky Mountains;" and in the event of President Polk's "recommendation to build block houses and stockade forts on the route to Oregon, becoming a law, we have encouragement," they said "of having that work to do, and under our peculiar circumstances, we can do it with less expense to the government than any other people."[b]

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[a]From a letter of Brigham Young to President James K. Polk, date of August 9, 1846. History of Brigham Young, MS. Bk. 2 p. 137.

[b]Times and Seasons, Vol. V, p. 1096.

Six days later Jesse C. Little was appointed by the Mormon Church authorities president of the Eastern States Mission, and in his letter of appointment was instructed as follows:

"If our government shall offer any facilities for emigrating to the western coast, embrace those facilities, if possible. As a wise and faithful man, take every honorable advantage of the times you can."[c]

"In consonance with my instructions," says Mr. Little, in his report to Brigham Young, which is recorded in the latter's manuscript history, "I * * * resolved upon visiting James K. Polk, President of the United States, to lay the situation of my brethren before him, and ask him, as the representative of our country, to stretch forth the federal arm in their behalf."

In pursuance of this design Mr. Little obtained a letter of introduction from John H. Steel, governor of New Hampshire, in which state Mr. Little had been reared. The governor in his letter declared that he had known Mr. Little from childhood, and believed him honest in his views and intentions, and added:

"Mr. Little visits Washington, if I understand him correctly, for the purpose of procuring, or endeavoring to procure, the freight of any provisions or naval stores which the government may be desirous of sending to Oregon, or to any portion of the Pacific. He is thus desirous of obtaining freight for the purpose of lessening the expense of chartering vessels to convey him and his followers to California, where they intend going and making a permanent settlement the present summer."[d]

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[c]Little's Report, Hist. of Brigham Young, MS. Bk. 2, pp. 11-12.

[d]Little's Report to Brigham Young.

From Luke Milber, also of Petersboro, N. H., Mr. Little secured a letter to Hon. Mace Moulton in Washington, which in addition to vouching for the high character of Mr. Little, based upon personal knowledge of him for twelve years, announced that he was "soliciting some aid from the general government, to assist himself and brethren throughout the United States in emigrating to California."

In May of the same year, at a church conference held in Philadelphia, Mr. Little made the acquaintance of the Kanes. They were an old and honorable Pennsylvania family. The father, Judge John K. Kane, had been attorney general of the state of Pennsylvania; and at the time of Mr. Little's visit at his home he was United States judge for the district of Pennsylvania, also President of the American Philosophical Society. Dr. Elisha Kent Kane, the famous arctic explorer and scientist, was his son; as was also Thomas L. Kane, who afterward served with distinction as Colonel and Brigadier General in the Union Army in the war between the states. From the latter Mr Little received a letter of introduction to Hon. Geo. M. Dallas, Vice-President of the United States. "He visits Washington," said Kane's letter to Mr. Dallas, "with no other object than the laudable one of desiring aid of the government for his people."

**Little's Consultation with the President.**—The arrival of Mr. Little at Washington on the 21st of May was most opportune for the business he had in hand. He called upon President Polk that same evening in company with a Mr. Dame of Massachusetts, and Mr. King, a representative of the same state. Sam Houston of Texas and other distinguished gentlemen were present. News of the capture of an American reconnoitering troop

of dragoons under command of Captain Thornton, on the east side of the Rio Grande, sixteen of whom were killed, had reached Washington early in May, and enabled the President in his message to Congress, on the 11th of that month, to say that "Mexico had invaded our territory, and shed the blood of our citizens on our own soil;" which led Congress two days later to declare war and vote the funds necessary to its vigorous prosecution. By the time Mr. Little called upon the President the news had reached Washington of the victory of the American forces under General Taylor at the battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma, fought on the 8th and 9th of May respectively. News of these victories aroused the war spirit throughout the land,[e] and hastened all the government schemes for prosecuting the war, including the plan of gathering the "Army of the West" at Fort Leavenworth, under Col. Stephen W. Kearny, to invade New Mexico, and ultimately co-operate with the Pacific fleet which it was designed should sweep round Cape Horn and attack on the Pacific coast of Mexico.[f] It was with this "Army of the West" that the Mormon Battalion was destined to be connected.

Mr. Little a few days later was informed by his friends in Washington that the plan for the Mormon participation in this movement to the west, discussed by the

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[e]Mr. Little notes this excitement in his Report, to Brigham Young, by saying in recording his movements of the 23rd of May :"There was considerable excitement in consequence of the news that Gen. Taylor had fought two battles with the Mexicans" (Little's Report, Hist. of Brigham Young Ms. Bk. 2, p. 16) And Lossing says that when "news of the two brilliant victories reached the states a thrill of joy went throughout the land, and bonfires, illuminations, orations, the thunder of cannons, were seen and heard in all the great cities". (Hist. U. S. p. 483).

[f]Lossing's History U. S., 1872 Edition, p. 483.

President and his cabinet, was for Mr. Little to go directly to the camps of the Mormon people in the west and have one thousand men fitted out and plunge into California, officered by their own men, the commanding officer to be appointed by President Polk; and to send one thousand more by way of Cape Horn, who will take cannon and everything needed in preparing defense; those by land to receive pay from the time Little should see them, and those going by water, from September first.[g]

At this point Mr. Little seems to have taken up the matter personally and directly with the President, and under date of June 1st addressed an "Appeal" to him. In it Mr Little expresses confidence in the President, else he would not have left his home "to ask favors" of him for his people (i. e., the Mormons). He gave an account of himself and his forefathers, who fought "in the battles of the Revolution;" of his own character, vouched for by his letters of introduction from men of high standing; and then avers that the people he represents are of as high character as himself. "I come to you," he said, "fully believing that you will not suffer me to depart without rendering me some pecuniary assistance. * * * Our brethren in the west are compelled to go [west]; and we in the eastern country are determined to go and live, and, if necessary, to suffer and die with them. Our determinations are fixed and cannot be changed. From twelve to fifteen thousand have already left Nauvoo for California, and many others are making ready to go. Some have gone around Cape Horn, and I trust before this time have landed at the Bay of San Francisco

"We have about forty thousand (members) in the

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[g]Little's Report, p. 16.

British Isles, and hundreds upon the Sandwich Islands, all determined to gather to this place, and thousands will sail this fall. There are yet many thousands scattered through the states, besides the great number in and around Nauvoo, who are determined to go as soon as possible, but many of them are poor (but noble men and women), and are destitute of means to pay their passage either by sea or land.

"If you assist us at this crisis," said the "Appeal," "I hereby pledge my honor, my life, my property and all I possess as the representative of this (the Mormon) people to stand ready at your call, and that the whole body of the people will act as one man in the land to which we are going, and should our territory be invaded we hold ourselves ready to enter the field of battle, and then like our patriot fathers * * * make the battle-field our grave or gain our liberty." Mr. Little signs himself "Agent of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Eastern States."[h]

Interviews followed with President Polk on the 3rd, 4th, and 5th of June. Of the visit to the President on the 5th Mr. Little writes in his Report:

"I visited President Polk; he informed me that we should be protected in California, and that five hundred or one thousand of our people should be taken into the service, officered by our own men; said that I should have letters from him, and from the secretary of the navy to the squadron. I waived the President's proposal until evening, when I wrote a letter of acceptance."[i]

There followed another and final interview with President Polk on the 8th of June:

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[h]Little's Report, p. 20-22.
[i]Ibid, p. 23.

"I called on the President, he was busy but sent me word to call on the secretary of war. I went to the war department, but as the secretary was busy, I did not see him; the President wished me to call at two p. m., which I did, and had an interview with him; he expressed his good feelings to our people—regarded us as good citizens, said he had received our suffrages, and we should be remembered; he had instructed the secretary of war to make out our papers, and that I could get away tomorrow."[i]

**The Orders to Enlist Mormon Volunteers.**—Colonel Thomas L. Kane was entrusted with the orders to Colonel, afterwards General, Stephen W. Kearny, and accompanied Mr. Little as far as St. Louis. Here they separated, Kane to go with his orders to Kearny, then at Fort Leavenworth, and Little to the camps of his people; then moving through southern Iowa.

It is not known just what considerations led President Polk to cut down the number of Mormons to be sent to occupy California from two thousand to five hundred. But in the orders sent to Col Kearny, that officer was directed not to take into the service a greater number of Mormons than one-third of his command, which was limited to about fifteen hundred men. "It is known," said Kearny's order, to enlist Mormon volunteers, "that a large body of Mormon emigrants are en route to California, for the purpose of settling in that country. You are desired to use all proper means to have a good understanding with them, to the end that the United States may have their co-operation in taking possession of, and holding, that country. It has been suggested here that many of these Mormons would willingly enter into the

[i] Little's Report, p. 23.

service of the United States, and aid us in our expedition against California. You are hereby authorized to muster into service such as can be induced to volunteer; not, however, to a number exceeding one-third of your entire force. Should they enter the service they will be paid as other volunteers, and you can allow them to designate, so far as it can be properly done, the persons to act as officers."[k]

**Terms of Enlistment.**—Under this order Kearny issued instructions to Captain James Allen, of the First Regular Dragoons, to proceed to the camps of the Mormons and endeavor to raise from among them four or five companies of volunteers to join him in his expedition to California. The character of the Battalion, terms of enlistment, pledges of the government are clearly set forth in Allen's instructions:

"Each company to consist of any number between 73 and 109; the officers of each company will be a captain, first lieutenant and second lieutenant, who will be elected by the privates, and subject to your approval; and the captains then to appoint the non-commissioned officers, also subject to your approval. The companies, upon being thus organized, will be mustered by you into the service of the United States, and from that day will commence to receive the pay, rations and other allowances given to the other infantry volunteers, each according to his rank. You will, upon mustering into service the fourth company, be considered as having the rank, pay and emoluments of a lieutenant-colonel of infantry, and are authorized to appoint an adjutant, sergeant-major, and quartermaster-sergeant for the battalion.

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[k]Executive Document No. 60, Letter of Secretary of War to Gen. Kearny, marked "Confidential", 1846.

"The companies, after being organized, will be marched to this post [i. e., Fort Leavenworth, whence the order was issued] where they will be armed and prepared for the field, after which they will, under your command, follow on my trail in the direction of Santa Fe, and where you will receive further orders from me.

"You will, upon organizing the companies, require provisions, wagons, horses, mules, etc. You must purchase everything that is necessary and give the necessary drafts upon the quartermaster and commissary departments at this post, which drafts will be paid upon presentation.

"You will have the Mormons distinctly to understand that I wish to have them as volunteers for twelve months; that they will be marched to California, receiving pay and allowances during the above time, and at its expiration they will be discharged, and allowed to retain, as their private property, the guns and accoutrements furnished to them at this post.

"Each company will be allowed four women as laundresses, who will travel with the company, receiving rations and other allowances given to the laundresses of our army.

"With the foregoing conditions, which are hereby pledged to the Mormons, and which will be faithfully kept by me and other officers in behalf of the government of the United States, I cannot doubt but that you will in a few days be able to raise five hundred young and efficient men for this expedition."

**Captain Allen in the Mormon Camps.**—Captain Allen arrived at Mount Pisgah on the 26th of June, accompanied by three dragoons and presented to the leading men of that place "A Circular to the Mormons" in har-

mony with his instructions. The presiding brethren at Mount Pisgah did not feel authorized to take any steps in the matter of Captain Allen's communication on the enlistment of a Battalion, but gave him a letter of introduction to President Young at Council Bluffs, for which place the Captain started immediately and arrived on the 30th of June. The following day he met with President Young and others in council and presented the whole question of raising a Battalion from the Mormon camps.

The question arose in the minds of the Mormon leaders as to the disposition of the camps which would be materially crippled by the withdrawal of so many young, strong, and able-bodied men. Already the question of wintering the camps and caring for so large an amount of stock possessed by them, loomed large among their difficulties. About one hundred and fifty miles to the west, in La Platte river, was "Grand Island," fifty-two miles long, with an average width of a mile and three-quarters, and well timbered; in the neighborhood of which also were immense areas of grass that might be cut for hay, and the rank growth of rushes here and there along the extensive river bottoms would enable much of the stock to winter on this range, could government permission be obtained for a large contingent of the camp to be stationed there. This country, as well as the one the camps were then occupying, was within the Louisiana Purchase, and largely divided into Indian reservations, hence could only be occupied by the whites by permission of the government.

The question of government permission therefore, in the event or the Battalion being raised, was submitted to Captain Allen, and he assumed the responsibility of saying that the camps might locate on Grand Island un-

till they could prosecute their journey. In his speech made to the camp the same day, the captain promised to write President Polk to give leave to the Mormon camps to stay on their route wherever it was necessary. At a council meeting held later in the day, on Brigham Young asking Captain Allen "if an officer enlisting men in an 'Indian country' had not a right to say to their families, "You can stay till your husbands return," the Captain replied "that he was the representative of President Polk and could act till he notified the President, who might ratify his engagements, or indemnify for damages. The President might give permission to travel through the Indian country and stop whenever and wherever circumstances required."[l]

After the first council meeting between Captain Allen and the Mormon leaders a public meeting was held at noon on the same day. Brigham Young introduced Captain Allen who addressed the people: "He said he was sent by Col. Stephen W. Kearny through the benevolence of Jas. K. Polk, President of the United States, to enlist five hundred of our men; that there were hundreds of thousands of volunteers ready [to enlist] in the states. He read his order from Col. Kearny and the circular which he himself had issued from Mount Pisgah and explained "[m]

The statement of Captain Allen that there were hundreds of thousands of volunteers ready to enlist in the states was quite true. The declaration of war upon Mexico by the congress "authorized the President to accept the service of fifty thousand volunteers, and placed ten millions of dollars at his disposal. * * * The call for

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[l]History of Brigham Young, Ms. Bk. 2, pp. 4, 5.
[m]Ibid, pp. 3, 4.

volunteers was answered by the prompt tender of the service of more than 300,000 men."[n] Four regiments were called for from Illinois, nine answered the call, numbering 8,370; only four of them, numbering 3,720 men, could be taken."[o]

**Brigham Young's Activities in Raising the Battalion.** Brigham Young followed Captain Allen in an address, at the aforesaid meeting. His own account of his remarks stand in his Ms. history as follows:

"I addressed the assembly; wished them to make a distinction between this action of the general government and our former oppressions in Missouri and Illinois. I said, the question might be asked, is it prudent for us to enlist to defend our country? If we answer in the affirmative, all are ready to go.

"Suppose we were admitted into the union as a state, and the government did not call on us, we would feel ourselves neglected. Let the Mormons be the first to set their feet on the soil of California. Captain Allen has assumed the responsibility of saying that we may locate on Grand Island, until we can prosecute our journey. This is the first offer we have ever had from the government to benefit us.

"I proposed that the five hundred volunteers be mustered and I would do my best to see all their families brought forward, as far as my influence extended, and feed them when I had anything to eat myself."[p]

At the close of the public meeting another council meeting was held, with Captain Allen present, when the question of the people having a right to remain on In-

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[n]History of the United States, Marcus Wilson, appendix p. 682; same Lossing, p. 482; Stephens, p. 488.

[o]Gregg's History of Hancock Co. Ill., p. 118.

[p]History of Brigham Young, Ms. Bk. 2, pp. 4, 5.

dian lands during the absence of the soldiers, and indeed along their whole route of travel, was further considered. Captain Allen withdrew from the council "and the Twelve," says Brigham Young, "continued to converse on the favorable prospect before us."[q]

It was arranged that Brigham Young should go to Mount Pisgah to raise volunteers for the Battalion; and that other leaders should prosecute the work of raising volunteers in the camps about Council Bluffs.

There was apparently some reluctance among the people to respond to this unexpected call, and it required some considerable persuasion to dispel it.

On the 11th of July, Col Thomas L. Kane reached the Mormon camps at Council Bluffs, and gave assurance that the general government had taken the Mormon case into consideration, inferentially with benevolant intentions.[r]

When within eleven miles of Mount Pisgah, Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball met Jesse C. Little, president of the Eastern States Mission, who reported his labors at Washington. Hisc written report was incorporated in Brigham Young's Ms. History for that year.

While at Pisgah Brigham Young wrote the camp at Garden Grove, and sent his letter by special messenger. After describing the terms of enlistment and the conditions under which the volunteers would be mustered out of service in California, etc., he said:

"They may stay (i. e. in California), look out the best locations for themselves and their friends, and defend the country. This is no hoax. Mr. Little, President of the

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[q]History of Brigham Young Ms. Bk. 2, pp. 4, 5.
[r]Taylor's Journal, entry of July 11th, 1846.

New England churches, is here direct from Washington, who has been to see the President on the subject of emigrating the saints to the western coast, and confirms all that Captain Allen has stated to us. The United States want our friendship, the President wants to do us good and secure our confidence. The outfit of this five hundred men costs us nothing, and their pay will be sufficient to take their families over the mountains. There is war between Mexico and the United States, to whom California must fall a prey, and if we are the first settlers, the old citizens cannot have a Hancock [county] or Missouri pretext to mob the saints. The thing is from above, for our good."

A letter of like spirit was sent by Brigham Young to the trustees at Nauvoo. In that letter the following passage occurs: 'This is the first time the government has stretched forth its arm to our assistance, and we receive their proffers with joy and thankfulness. We feel confident they [the Battalion] will have little or no fighting. The pay of the five hundred men will take their families to them. The Mormons will then be the old settlers and have a chance to choose the best locations.[s]

**Muster of the Battalion.**—When Brigham Young returned from Mount Pisgah, a public meeting was held on the 13th of July, and the final work of enrollment of the Battalion began. At the opening meeting Brigham Young said:

"If we want the privilege of going where we can worship God according to the dictates of our conscience, we must raise the Battalion. I say it is right, and who cares for sacrificing our comfort for a few years. I

[s]History Brigham Young Ms. Bk. 2, pp. 30-34.

would rather have undertaken to raise 2,000 a year ago in 24 hours, than 100 in one week now."[t]

Later he said to the mustering companies, "You could not ask for anything more acceptable than this mission."[u] An American flag—flag of the United States—"brought out from the store-house of things rescued"—in the Mormon exodus from Illinois—"was hoisted to a tree mast, and under it the enrollment took place."[v] The enrollment of the Battalion was completed on the 16th of July, and that day Captain Allen took the organization under his command.

**Farewell Scenes.**—"There was no sentimental affectation at their leave-taking',' remarks Col. Kane in his account of the departure of the Battalion from the camps. The afternoon before their departure a "ball" was given in their honor. Of this "ball," Col. Kane says:

"A more merry dancing rout I have never seen, though the company went without refreshments and their ball room was of the most primitive kind. [Under a bowery where the ground had been trodden firm and hard by frequent use] To the canto of debonnair violins, the cheer of horns, the jingle of sleigh bells, and the jovial snoring of the tambourine, they did dance! None of your minuets or other mortuary processions of gentles in etiquette, tight shoes, and pinching gloves, but the spirited and scientific displays of our venerated and merry grandparents, who were not above following the fiddle to the Foxchase Inn, or Gardens of Gray's Ferry. French fours, Copenhagen jigs, Virginia reels, and the like forgotten figures executed with the spirit of people too

[t]History of Brigham Young Ms. Bk. 2, p. 44.
[u]History of Brigham Young Ms. Bk. 2, p. 48.
[v]Kane's Licture "The Mormons", p. 80.

happy to be slow, or bashful, or constrained. Light hearts, lithe figures, and light feet, had it their own way from an early hour till after the sun had dipped behind the sharp sky line of the Omaha hills."[w]

On the 20th of July the Battalion took up its march for Fort Leavenworth, where it arrived on the 1st of August, and began preparations for the great western march.

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[w]Kane's Lecture "The Mormons", pp. 80, 81.

## III.

## ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES TO THE MORMONS ARISING FROM THE ENLISTMENT OF THE BATTALION.

The "call" for the Mormon Battalion was not an unfriendly act on the part of the United States' government towards the Mormon people. A representative of the Church, as we have seen, had appealed most earnestly to the executive of the nation for aid in the western emigrations of that people; and when it was decided by the administration to "accept" the services of such a force of volunteers, the Mormon leaders received the decision as an answer to their appeal for aid.

**A Sacrifice Nevertheless.**—But notwithstanding the government service was asked for by the representative of the Mormon people, and the granting of it was regarded by the Mormon leaders at the time as a great advantage to their people, it brought to the volunteers and to the people generally much of sacrifice. For one thing the opportunity to avail themselves of their tendered service to the government came at an unexpected and a most inconvenient time. As explained afterwards by Col. Kane, "The young and those who could best have been spared, were then away from the main body, either with pioneer companies in the van, or, their faith unannounced, seeking work and food about the northwest settlements, to support them till the return of the season for commencing emigration. The force was therefore to be recruited from among the fathers of families, and others whose presence it was most desirable to retain."[a] Practically five hundred wagons were left without team-

sters, and as many families were left without their natural protectors and providers. The families of the Battalion, with the families of their friends, in whose care they must leave their loved ones, and upon whom they must depend for succor, were then scattered in a string of camps for some hundreds of miles between Nauvoo and Council Bluffs, with no certain abiding place designated, and no immediate prospect of being permanently settled. To volunter for a "war-march" of two thousand miles, much of which was desert, under such circumstances, was doubly hard. Moreover the Mormon people, from their then point of view, had little to be grateful for to the government of the United States. Their appeals from what to them was the injustice of Missouri and Illinois had met with but cold reception at Washington. They did not and could not be expected to understand, much less sympathize with, the refinements employed by the national legislators in drawing nice distinctions about the division of sovereignty between the states and the general government. They were self-conscious of wrongs inflicted upon their community in the two states in which they had settled—Missouri and Illinois. They had appealed to the general government for a redress of those grievances without avail; and now they were asked by their leaders to go into the service of that government which might mean the sacrifice of life, and surely meant the abandonment of their families to the care of others under circumstances the most trying. To respond to the call made upon them—both as to the volunteers and the camped community whence they were mustered—was a manifestation of unselfishness not often paralleled in history.

**Advantages of the Enlistment.**—Notwithstanding all the sacrifices involved, Brigham Young and those associ-

ated with him were too astute as leaders not to appreciate the advantages of having a considerable number of their people to enter the service of the United States. The charge of disloyalty to the American government had often been made against the Mormons, which not all their protests and denials could overcome. But to enter the service of the government in a time of war, involving such inconveniences as must be theirs, would be an evidence of loyalty that would stand forever, both unimpeached and unimpeachable. That such was the understanding of Brigham Young is specifically expressed by him about a month after the departure of the Battalion. "Let every one distinctly understand," said he, "that the Mormon Battalion was organized from our camp to allay the prejudices of the people, prove our loyalty to the government of the United States, and for the present and temporal salvation of Israel; that this act left near five hundred teams destitute of drivers and provisions for the winter, and nearly as many families without protection and help."[b]

**The Right to Settle on Indian Lands Secured.**—Another advantage appealed to the leaders: It had become evident before the call was made for the Battalion, that while it might be possible for a specially organized pioneer company to go over the mountains that season—preparations for which were being rapidly made—the very great majority of the camps would be under the necessity of spending a year or more in southern Iowa, principally on Indian lands. The prospects of remaining upon such lands in peace would be much enhanced if it could be pleaded that five hundred of their men were

[b]History of Brigham Young, August 14, 1846, Ms., Bk. 2, pp. 151-2.

in the service of the government of the United States; and subsequent events demonstrated the validity of such a plea; also it was the advantage sought to be secured by Brigham Young in his first conference with Captain Allen on the subject of the enlistment of the Battalion. Under these arrangements of occupancy, as the Indian titles in lands in Iowa expired, the Mormon occupants acquired valuable pre-emption rights up and down the Missouri river from Council Bluffs for a distance of between fifty and sixty miles, stretching back on the east side of said river some thirty or forty miles.[c]

**Money Value of the Enlistment.**—Another consideration of importance was the remuneration of these soldiers. A year's pay for their clothing in advance at the rate of $3.50 per man per month, would amout to $42.00 each; and to $21,000 for the Battalion. Deciding to make their march in the clothing they had when enlisting, part of their money for clothing was sent back from Fort Leavenworth to be used for the benefit of the families of the Battalion, and part of it to assist the Mormon leaders. Subsequently agents were secretly sent to Santa Fe to bring back to the camps the pay of the soldiers that had accured by the time they had arrived there. This amounted to three months' pay at the following rates: captain, $50.00 per month—rations 20 cents per day; first lieutenant, $30.00 per month—rations 20 cents per day; second lieutenant, $25.00 per month—rations 20 cents per day; fiirst sergeant, $16.00 per month; sergeants, $13.00 per month; corporals, $9.00 per month; musicians, $8.00 per month; and privates, $7.00 per month.

The payment at Santa Fe was made in government

[c]See Orson Pratt in Millennial Star, Vol. X, pp. 241-7.

checks—"not very available at Santa Fe"—i. e. not easily negotiable—writes Col. Cooke.[d] It has often been claimed that the Battalion was paid a bounty—$42.00 per man—on entering the service. This was not the case. The payment for clothing, one year in advance, at the rate of $3.50 per month has been mistaken for bounty.[e] It was only by foregoing the purchase of clothing that the Battalion could send the payment for it to their families and to the Mormon leaders. This source of revenue to the camps was accounted a very great blessing at the time. In official letters to the Battalion from the Mormon leaders, under date of August 16th and 21st, respectively, it was said, in the first, that the Battalion had been placed in circumstances which enabled them to control more means than all the rest of the Mormon people in the wilderness; in the second Brigham Young said: "We consider the money you have received, as compensation for your clothing, a peculiar manifestation of the kind providence of our Heavenly Father at this particular time, which is just the time for the purchasing of provisions and goods for the winter supply of the Camp.[f]

**The Equipment of the Battalion to be Retained.**—In addition to this payment for clothing, and the monthly pay, there was the five hundred stand of arms and camp equipment which were to become the personal property of the men when discharged in California. These several considerations led John Taylor—who became the

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[d]Conquest of New Mexico, p. 92.

[e]See History of the Mormon Church (Roberts) Americana, March, 1912, p. 308, for a letter from the United States War Department on this subject.

[f]History Mormon Church, Americana, March, 1912, p. 310.

successor to Brigham Young in Mormon leadership—in an address to the Mormons in England—to say:

"The President of the United States is favorably disposed to us. He has sent out orders to have five hundred of our brethren employed for one year in an expedition that was fitting out against California, with orders for them to be employed for one year, and when to be discharged in California, and to have their arms and implements of war given to them at the expiration of the term, and as there is no prospect of any opposition, it amounts to the same as paying them for going to the place where they were destined to go without.[g]

**Appreciation of Mormon Leaders.**—In a letter to President Polk, under date of August 9th, 1846, after reminding the President of the disadvantages the Mormon camps experienced in rasing the Battalion, Brigham Young said:

"But in the midst of this we were cheered with the presence of our friend, Mr. Little, of New Hampshire, who assures us of the personal friendship of the President in the act before us; and this assurance, though not doubted by us in the least, was soon made doubly sure by the testimony of Col. Kane, of Philadelphia."

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[g]Mill. Star, Vol. VIII, p. 117.

## IV.

## THE MARCH OF THE BATTALION FROM FORT LEAVENWORTH.

At Fort Leavenworth the Battalion received its equipment of 100 tents, one for every 6 privates; also their arms and camp accoutrements. When drawing the checks for clothing, the paymaster expressed great surprise to find that every man was able to sign his own name to the pay roll.

**Death of Col. Allen. Question of a Successor.**—At Fort Leavenworth Col. Allen was taken ill; but on the 12th of August he ordered the Battalion to start on its western march, while he would remain a few days, recuperate and overtake them. He died on the 23rd, much lamented by the Battalion, which had become warmly attached to him. Commenting upon his demise the author of the "Doniphan Expedition," William E. Connelly, says:

"Thus died Lieutenant-Colonel Allen, of the first U. S. dragoons, in the midst of a career of usefulness under the favoring smiles of fortune, beloved while living, regretted after death by all who knew him, both among the volunteers and the troops."

On the death of Col. Allen the question of succession in command was considered. It appears that this subject was mooted at the time the companies of the Battalion were enlisted; and "Col. Allen repeatedly stated to us," says Brigham Young, "that there would be no officer in the Battalion, except himself, only from among our people; that if he fell in battle, or was sick, or disabled by any means, the command would devolve on the

ranking officer, which would be the Captain of Company 'A' and 'B', and so on according to letter." The Battalion appears to have had the same understanding, for at a council meeting of the officers it was agreed by them that Captain Jefferson Hunt, of Company "A", should assume command, which decision was afterwards sustained by the unanimous vote of the men. Meantime, however, Major Horton, in command at Fort Leavenworth, sent Lieutenant A. J. Smith, of the regular army, to take command of the Battalion. This led to a threatened complication; for an appeal to such written military authorities as were available to the officers of the Battalion, left them hopelessly divided in their conclusions. On the arrival of Lieutenant Smith a council of officers was held in which the Battalion officers demanded to know what reasons existed for their acceptance of him as commander rather than Captain Hunt. To which it was answered that the government property in possession of the Battalion was not yet receipted for, but that Lieutenant Smith could receipt for it, and being a commissioned officer of the regular mary, he would be known at Washington, and his actions and orders recognized; whereas the officers of the Battalion had not yet received their commissions, and it would be doubtful if their selection of a commander would be approved. After this discussion Captain Hunt submitted the matter to the officers, and all but three voted in favor of accepting Lieutenant Smith as the commander of the Battalion.

**Complaints of the Volunteers.**—With Lieutenant Smith had come Dr. George B. Sanderson, whom Col. Allen, at Leavenworth, had appointed a surgeon in the U. S. army, to serve with the Mormon Battalion. Ac-

cording to the historian of the Battalion,[c] the volunteers suffered much because of the "arrogance, inefficiency and petty oppressions" of these two officers. This view of these officers, however, is to be accounted for by the Volunteers being suddenly brought under the enforced discipline of the U. S. army regulations. The heat of the season was excessive, the men had been already much exhausted by the strenuous labor and exposure during the journey through Iowa with their people earlier in the season, and as a result many of them fell a prey to the malaria prevalent in the country and at this season of the year. For this Dr. Sanderson prescribed calomel and arsenic, and as the men were averse to taking medicine, pleading even religious scruples against the drugs, the matter gave rise to much unpleasantness between the Battalion physician and the command, involving therein Lieutenant Smith, who, in the interest of what he no doubt regarded as discipline, sided with the physician.

**The Line of March.**—The Battalion's line of march, from Fort Leavenworth, after crossing the Kaw or Kansas river, followed that of the first Missouri Dragoons, led over the route that same year by Col. Doniphan, via Council Grove, thence some distance up the Arkansas River to a little beyond Fort Mann, where they crossed that river in order to take what was known as the "Cimmeron Route"—because it crossed Cimmeron river and followed some distance up the south branch of the stream, called Cimmeron Creek. The last crossing of the Arkansas they reached on the 16th of September, and here the commanding officer insisted that most of the

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[c]This is Sergeant Daniel Tyler, author of "A Concise History of the Mormon Battalion in the Mexican War." The work was published in 1881. H. H. Bancroft speaks very highly of this work in his History of California, Vol. V, p. 477, note.

families—about twelve or fifteen in number, which had so far accompanied the Battalion—should be detached and sent under a guard of ten men up the Arkansas to Pueblo, which nestles at the east base of the Rocky mountain range. There were stout protests against this "division of the Battalion;" as it was held to be a violation of the promise that the Battalion would not be divided, also that these families should be permitted to travel with the Battalion to California. Unquestionably, however, the arrangement was in the best interests both of the families and of the Battalion, and accordingly the detachment was made up as proposed, and marched to Pueblo under command of Captain Nelson Higgins.

**Arrival at Santa Fe; Condition of the Command.**—The main body of the command continued its march south-westward to San Miguel, thence turning the point of a mountain range marched north westward to Santa Fe, where they arrived in two detachments on the 9th and 12th of October, respectively. Upon the arrival of the first detachment the Battalion was received by a salute of one hundred guns by order of Col. Doniphan,[b] then in command both as civil and military head of the department of New Mexico; but making ready for what was to be his great and historic march upon Chihuahua.

On the arrival of the Battalion at Santa Fe it was learned that General Kearny, previous to his departure

[b]Col. Doniphan had come to Santa Fe with Kearny, commanding the first Missouri regiment; and after the departure of the General for California, he was left in command at Santa Fe until the arrival of Col. Sterling Price, who when he arrived, was to take command at Santa Fe (Doniphan's expedition, Connelley, 1907, pp. 250-1-3). The historian of the Mormon Battalion notes that the command of Col. Price, numbering about 1,200 men, received no such marked honor on their arrival in Sant Fe as was accorded to the Battalion. (Tyler's Battalion, p. 164.)

for the west, had designated Col. P. St. George Cooke[c] to take command of the Battalion and to follow on his trail with wagons to California.

Speaking of the condition of the Battalion, on its arrival in Santa Fe, and remarking on its physical unfitness to undertake the march to California, Col. Cooke, in his "Conquest of New Mexico," says:

"Everything conspired to discourage the extraordinary undertaking of marching this Battalion eleven hundred miles, for the much greater part through an unknown wilderness, without road or trail, and with a wagon train.

"It was enlisted too much by families; some were too old and feeble, and some too young; it was embarrassed by many women; it was undisciplined; it was much worn by traveling on foot, and marching from Nauvoo, Illinois; their clothing was very scant; there was no money to pay them, or clothing to issue; their mules were utterly broken down; the quartermaster department was without funds, and its credit bad; and animals were scarce. Those procured were very inferior, and were deteriorating every hour for lack of forage or grazing."[d] "So every preparation must be pushed—hurried. A small

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[c]The Colonel was born in Virginia in 1809. Graduated from West Point in 1827; was in the Black Hawk war in Illinois—1832, and at the Battle of Bad Ax, fought in July of that year. In 1833 he was made a Lieutenant; saw service on the plains, principally in what is now Kansas, before the Mexican war; in this war he took a prominent part in the affairs at Santa Fe and marched the Mormon Battalion to California. "During the fifties, in the border troubles in Kansas he saw much service; in the Civil War he was for the Union. He was retired in 1873, having served in the army continuously for forty-six years. He died March 20, 1895." "Doniphan's Expedition," p. 264.

[d]Later, Col. Cooke again complains of his teams, in the following passage: "I have brought road tools and have determined to take through my wagons; but the experiment is not

party with families had been sent from Arkansas crossing up the river, to winter at a small settlement close to the mountains, called Pueblo. The Battalion was now inspected, and eighty-six men found inefficient were ordered, under two officers, with nearly all the women, to go to the same point; five wives of officers were reluctantly allowed to accompany the march, but furnished their own transportation. "By special arrangement and consent, the Battalion was paid in checks—not very available at Santa Fe, (i. e. negotiable).

"With every effort, the quartermaster could only undertake to furnish rations for sixty days; and, in fact, full rations, of only flour, sugar, coffee and salt; salt pork only for thirty days, and soap for twenty. To venture without pack-saddles would be grossly imprudent, and so that burden was added."[e]

**Invalided Detachment Sent to Pueblo.**—It was understood that the men invalided and their escort, together with the women and children belonging to the Battalion, would have the privilege in the spring of intercepting the main body of their people moving to the west, and going with them "at government expense."[f] The above ar-

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a fair one, as the mules are broken down at the outset. The only good ones, about twenty, which I bought near Albuquerque, were taken for the express for Fremont's mail—the General's order requiring the twenty-one best in Santa Fe." (Cooke's Conquest, p. 93). To this Sergeant Tyler adds: "It is but justice to the Colonel to state here that with few exceptions, the mule and ox teams used from Santa Fe to California were the same worn out and broken down animals that we had driven all the way from Council Bluffs and Fort Leavenworth; indeed, some of them had been driven all he way from Nauvoo, the same season." (Tyler's Battalion, p. 175).

[e]Conquest of New Mexico and California. An Historical and Personal Narrative by P. St. George Cooke, G. P. Putman and Sons, N. Y. 1878: pp. 91-2.

[f]See History of the Mormon Church, Americana, (Roberts), April No. p. 3776—note.

rangement was the result of a council of the officers of the Battalion with Colonel Doniphan of Missouri, then in charge of military and civil affairs at Santa Fe, and with Col Cooke who had been designated by Gen. Kearny to take command of the Battalion in its march to the Pacific, on his own departure from Santa Fe to California. Captain James Brown, of Company C., and St. Elam Luddington, of Company B, were the two officers above referred to as being placed in charge of the detachment. This company arrived at Pueblo on the 17th of November, and went into winter quarters near the encampment of Captain Higgins, who had preceded them to that point; and the next spring, according to the above arrangement, joined in the westward movement of their people, following so closely the pioneer company led by Brigham Young, that they entered Salt Lake Valley on the 29th of July, five days after the arrival of the first pioneer company. To the wife of one of the members of the Battalion, Mrs. Catherine Campbell Steele, wife of John Steele, Company D, was born the first white child in "Utah," August 9th, 1847.

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## V.

## THE MARCH OF THE BATTALION FROM SANTA FE TO THE MOUTH OF THE GILA.

The Battalion began its march from Santa Fe on the 19th of October, Colonel Cooke in command, Lieutenant A. J. Smith, who had led the Battalion to Santa Fe, became the acting commissary of subsistence; and Lieutenant George Stoneman, acting quartermaster, instead of Lieutenant Samuel E. Gully, who had resigned. Both Smith and Stoneman were of the regular army. Dr. Sanderson was continued as Physician-surgeon to the command. The guides to the expedition—appointed by Gen. Kearny—were Weaver, Charbonneau, and Leroux; and Stephen C. Foster, called "Doctor," in all the narratives, was employed as interpreter.

**More Invaliding.**—The course of the march for some time was southward down the valley of the Rio Grande. On the 10th of November, fifty-five more men were declared physically unable through sickness to continue the march, and accordingly were detached, and under Lieutenant W. W. Willis were ordered back to Pueblo to join the other detachments that had been sent there. After much suffering from the hardships of the journey—weak teams, scant supplies of food, illy clad, general sickness among the men, the fall of December snows in the mountain ranges north of Santa Fe, excessive cold, and several deaths occurring, this detachment finally arrived at Pueblo between the 20th and 24th of December, in a most pitiable condition; but they were warmly received

by members of the Battalion already quartered there,[a] numbering, now, all told, about one hundred and fifty.

**Hardship of Excessive Toil.**—One cause of so many men breaking down in health was the excessive toil at the wagons through the sand stretches of the road, began early in the march from Santa Fe—while yet in the valley of the Rio del Norte, in fact, and continuing along the whole route to and through the California desert lying between the Colorado and the coast range of mountains. "Our course now lay down the Rio del Norte [The Rio Grande]," says Sergeant Tyler. "We found the roads extremely sandy in many places, and the men while carrying blankets, knapsacks, cartridge boxes (each containing thirty-six rounds of ammunition), and muskets on their backs, and living on short rations, had to pull at long ropes to aid the teams. The deep sand alone, without any load was enough to wear out both man and beast." Later he remarks: "We had to leave the river for a time, and have twenty men to each wagon with long ropes to help the teams pull the wagons over the sand hills. The commander perched himself on one of the hills, like a hawk on a fence post, sending down his orders with the sharpness of—well, to the Battalion, it is enough to say—Colonel Cooke."

One of the Battalion celebrates this incident of the march in doggerel verse of which two stanzas follow:

> "Our hardships reach their rough extremes,
> When valiant men are roped with teams,
> Hour after hour, and day by day,

[a] See Tyler's Battalion Ch. XX. Lieutenant Willis gives the date of arrival 24th of December. Captains Brown and Higgins, stationed at Pueblo, give the 20th. The latter kept a daily journal.

To wear our strength and lives away.

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"We see some twenty men or more
With empty stomachs and foot sore,
Bound to one wagon plodding on
Through sand, beneath a burning sun.[b]

In the trackless part of the Battalion's march through the sand stretches, in addition to pulling at the wagons, companies marched in double-single file, in each other's footsteps, to make tracks for the wagon wheels.

Irrigation in New Mexico.—It was while at Santa Fe, and while passing down the Rio del Norte, that the Battalion saw, for the first time, irrigation in operation. Tyler thus describes it: "Canals for irrigation purposes were found all along the banks of the river. Some of them several miles in length. They conveyed water to the farms, or as they were called in that country, ranchos. There being little or no rain during the growing season, the water was made to flow over the ground until it was sufficiently saturated, and then shut off until needed again for the same purpose."

**March Down the Rio Grande.**—As the command in its southward movement down the Rio Grande reached the point where General Kearny left the valley for a direct march westward—228 miles south of Santa Fe—and where, too, Kearny had abandoned his wagons; the guides declared it impossible to follow the Gila route proper with the wagons; and hence a circuit to the south through Sonora via of Janos and Fronteras was proposed and determined upon at a council of officers.

In the first stages of this changed course, however, the road bore to the southeast, and this was not to the

[b]Tyler's History of The Mormon Battalion, pp. 180-183.

liking of Col. Cooke, because it would carry his command within hailing distance of General Wool, who might incorporate it in the "Army of the Centre,"—as the General's division of the invading forces against Mexico was called—to operate against Chihuahua. In that event, as the Colonel himself expressed it, he would lose his trip to California. To bear to the southeast was not to the liking of the Battalion, as that was not in the direction of California, but one which might lead them within the sphere of the "Army of the Centre," and they would find themselves discharged in Old Mexico instead of California, at the end of their term of enlistment. The entire command was thrown into gloom by this change in the line of march: "All of our hopes, conversations and songs," says the historian of the Battalion—Tyler—"were centered on California. Somewhere on that broad domain we expected to join our families and friends."

**"Blow the Right!" The Westward Turn.**—"On the morning of the 21st," says Tyler, "the command resumed its journey, marching in a southern direction for about two miles, when it was found that the road began to bear southeast instead of southwest, as stated by the guides. The Colonel looked in the direction of the road, then to the southwest, then to the west, saying, 'I don't want to get under General Wool, and lose my trip to California.' He arose in his saddle and ordered a halt. He then said with firmness: 'This is not my course. I was ordered to California,' 'and,' he added with an oath, 'I will go there or die in the attempt' Then turning to the bugler, he said, 'Blow the right!'

"Turning westward at this point, 32° 41′ north latitude, and but a short distance—some thirty miles—north of the present city of El Paso—the course of march was

westward to San Bernardino rancho, thence to Yanos and so to the San Pedro river where the command arrived on the 9th of December.

"**The Fight with Wild Bulls.**—Here occurred the only fighting the Battalion engaged in on its expedition, a battle with wild bulls. This section of the country seemed to abound with herds of wild cattle, and the males among them were much more bold and ferocious than among the buffalos. Attracted by curiosity these herds gathered along the line of march, alternately scampering away and approaching; and some of the bolder ones, as if in resentment of the Battalion's invasion, attacked the column. Several mules were gored to death by them, both in the teams and among the pack animals; and Colonel Cooke records how some of the wagons were thrown about by the mad charge of these furious beasts. The troops had been ordered to march with guns unloaded, but in the presence of such a danger the men loaded their muskets without waiting for an order to that effect, and when attacked would fire upon the charging beasts, so that the rattle of musketry was for once heard all along the line. The bulls were very tenacious of life, however, and more desperate and dangerous when wounded than before."

Tyler speaks of one fight between Dr. William Spencer and a bull which was shot five times, twice through the lungs, twice through the heart, and once through the head, and yet would alternately rise and fall and rush upon the doctor until a sixth ball between the eyes, and near the curl of the pate, proved fatal.[c] Colonel Cooke confirms Tyler's narrative about the bull continuing to

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[c] Tyler's Battalion, pp. 219, 220.

rush on after being twice shot through the heart, and adds: "I have seen the heart." Cooke also relates the feat of Corporal Frost in bringing down one of these ferocious animals: "I was very near Corporal Frost, when an immense coal-black bull came charging upon us, a hundred yards distant. Frost aimed his musket, a flint-lock, very deliberately and only fired when the beast was within six paces; it fell headlong, almost at our feet."[d] Tyler adds: "The Corporal was on foot while, of course, the Colonel and staff were mounted. On the first appearance of the bull, the Colonel, with his usual firm manner of speech, ordered the corporal to load his gun, supposing, of course, that he had observed the previous order of prohibition. To this command he (the corporal) paid no attention. Thinking him either stupified or, dumbfounded, with much warmth and a foul epithet he next ordered him to run, but this mandate was as little heeded as the other. Doubtless Cooke thought one man's 'ignorance with some stubborness' was about to receive a terrible retribution, but when he saw the monster lifeless at his feet, through the well-directed aim of the brave and fearless corporal, how changed must have been his feelings!"[e] The number of the wild bovine enemy killed in the engagement is variously reported as from twenty to sixty, and by one writer as high as eighty-one.

**Mexican Opposition at Tucson.**—Leaving the San Pedro the command marched northeasterly to Tucson, a Mexican town of between four and five hundred inhabitants. It was garrisoned at the time by a Mexican force two hundred strong, according to Cooke, commanded by Captain Comaduran, who was under order from the Gov-

[d]Cooke's Conquest, pp. 145, 6.
[e]Tyler's Battalion, p. 219.

ernor of Sonora, Don Manuel Gandara, not to allow an armed force to pass through the town without resistance. The guides furnished the Battalion by General Kearny, however, declared it was for the command either to march through Tucson, or make a detour which would mean a hundred miles out of the way over a trackless wilderness and mountains. Cooke determined to march through Tucson. Foster, the interpreter, went into the town in advance and was put under guard; a corporal, son of the Mexican commander, with three Mexican soldiers was met by the command and questioned about Foster, and on admitting that he was under guard, the corporal and his escort were immediately placed under arrest by Cooke, to be held as hostages for the safety of the interpreter. One Mexican, however, was released, who, with two of the Battalion guides, carried a note demanding Foster's release. This was complied with, and about midnight Foster was brought to camp, attended by two officers authorized "to make a special armistice." Cooke proposed that the Mexican command deliver up a few arms as a guarantee of surrender, and a token that the inhabitants of Tucson would not fight against the United States unless they were exchanged as prisoners of war; the Mexican prisoners were also released.[f] These events occurred while the Battalion was about sixteen miles from Tucson.

The next day, when on the march, Cooke received a message from Captain Comandurau declining the proposition to surrender The Battalion were ordered to load their guns with ball. Before reaching the town, however, another message was received saying that the garrison had retreated taking two brass cannons and forc-

[f] Cooke's Conquest, p. 149.

ing most of the inhabitants to accompany them. About a dozen armed Mexicans met the American force to escort them into the town. Before passing through the gates, the commander of the Battalion addressed the soldiers saying, in effect, that the garrison and citizens had fled leaving their property behind; but they had not come to make war upon Sonora, and there must be no interference with the private property of the citizens.[g] The Battalion marched through Tucson and went into camp about half a mile beyond on a small stream.

Before leaving the vicinity Cooke with a party of fifty reconnoitered the country above the town towards a village and church, where, it was supposed, the garrison and main body of the people had taken refuge. As the nature of the country, however, afforded excellent opportunities for ambush, if the Mexicans should choose to make resistance, the company of fifty returned. However the movement was not without its value since, according

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[g]Previous to this the Colonel had issued the following order:

"Head Quarters Mormon Battalion,
"Camp on the San Pedro,
"December 13th, 1846.

"Thus far on our course we have followed the guides furnished us by the General [Kearny]. These guides now point to Tucson, a garrison town, as our road, and assert that any other course is a hundred miles out of the way and over a trackless wilderness of mountains, rivers and hills. We will march, then, to Tucson. We came not to make war on Sonora, and less still to destroy an important outpost of defense against Indians: but we will take the straight road before us, and overcome all resistance. But shall I remind you that the American soldier ever shows justice and kindness to the unarmed and unresisting? The property of individuals you will hold sacred. The people of Sonora are not our enemies.

"By order of

"Lieut.-Col. Cooke,
"(Signed) P. C. Merrill,
"Adjutant.

to Col. Cooke, and as was afterwards ascertained, it caused the Mexicans who had fled to the aforesaid village to still further retreat, and the reinforcements which had come from the presidios of Fronteras, Santa Cruz and Tubac, to return to their posts.[h]

**Junction With Kearny's Trail.**—Renewing its journey the command in the course of three days, by hard marching, reached the Gila river and intersected the route followed by General Kearny, four hundred and seventy-four miles from the point at which they left it in the valley of the Rio Grande.

The Southern Pacific Railroad traverses practically the route of the Battalion between these two points. Colonel Cooke made a map of this part of the Battalion's journey—published in his book, (see map fold) and referring to it, in connection with the Southern Pacific Railroad, he says: "A new administration, in which Southern interests prevailed, with the great problem of the practicability and best location of a Pacific Railroad under investigation, had the map of this wagon route before them with its continuance to the west, and perceived that it gave exactly the solution of its unknown element, that a southern route would avoid both the Rocky Mountains and Sierra Nevada, with their snows, and would meet no obstacle in this great interval. The new 'Gadsden Treaty' was the result; it was signed, December 30, 1853."[i]

**The March Down the Gila.**—Following more or less the windings of the Gila, the way made difficult from alternating stretches of deep sand and miry clay, the com-

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[h]See Cooke's Conquest, p. 151; also Tyler's Battalion, pp. 228-230.

[i]Cooke's Conquest, p. 159.

mand arrived at the junction of the Gila with the Colorado on the 8th of January.

An attempt at the shipment of part of the command's provisions down the river on a flat boat proved a sad failure, and ended in considerable loss. The scheme was Col. Cooke's. The "boat" was constructed by placing two wagon beds end to end and lashing them to two dry cottonwood logs. On this improvised boat two thousand five hundred pounds of provision and corn were placed. At places the river spread out over sand bars with but three or four inches of water covering them; the boat was repeatedly lodged on these, and the precious stores of food had to be landed in several places. The most of it was never recovered, though repeated efforts were made to regain it.

**At the Mouth of the Gila.**—Speaking of the Gila at its junction with the Colorado, and of the conditions obtaining in the command at that stage of the march, Col. Cooke writes: "A vast bottom; the country about the two rivers is a picture of desolation; nothing like vegetation beyond the alluvium of the two rivers; bleak mountains, wild looking peaks, stony hills and plains, fill the view. We are encamped in the midst of wild hemp. The mules are in mezquit thickets,with a little bunch grass, a half a mile off. The mules are weak, and their failing, or flagging to-day in ten miles, is very unpromising for the hundred mile stretch, dry and barren, before them. There is no grass, and only scanty cottonwood boughs for them to-night, but I sent out forty men to gather the fruit, called tornia, a variety of the mezquit They have gathered twelve or fifteen bushels, which has been spread out to be eaten on a hard part of the sand-bar.

"Francisco was sent across the river to fire the thick-

ets beyond—this to clear the way for the pioneer party in the morning. He says the river is deeper than usual; it is wider than the Missouri, and of the same muddy color. * * * It is said to be sixty miles to the mouth of the river."—the Colorado.[j]

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[j]Conquest, pp. 170-1.

## VI.

## THE MARCH OF THE BATTALION FROM THE COLORADO TO THE PACIFIC OCEAN.

This part of the march led through what is now marked on the maps of southern California as the "Colorado Desert," "nature's exhausted region lying between the Colorado river and the eastern base of the coast range"—some of it being below the sea level. Much of the dreary way lay through stretches of sand, and the men were compelled to aid the teams by pulling on ropes, fifteen to twenty men to a wagon. No water was to be had but by the digging of deep wells in the desert sands. These often yielded but little, and at that a poor quality, of water. The suffering of both men and beasts was terrible. "The march of the last five days"—the time it took to cross the desert to the little running stream called "Carriso Creek,"—kas "the most trying of any we had made on both men and animals," writes Col. Cooke.

**Destitution and Suffering of the Men en March.**—"We here found the heaviest sand, hottest days, and coldest nights," says Tyler, "with no water and but little food." "At this time," he continues, "the men were nearly bare-footed; some used, instead of shoes, rawhide wrapped around their feet, while others improvised a novel style of boots by stripping the skin from the leg of an ox To do this, a ring was cut around the hide above and below the gambrel joint, and then the skin taken off without cutting it lengthwise. After this, the lower end was sewed up with sinews, when it was ready for the

wearer, the natural crook of the hide adapting it somewhat to the shape of the foot. Others wrapped cast-off clothing around their feet, to shield them from the burning sand during the day and the cold at night.

"Before we arrived at the Carriso many of the men were so nearly used up from thirst, hunger and fatigue, that they were unable to speak until they reached the water or had it brought to them. Those who were strongest reported, when they arrived, that they had passed many lying exhausted by the way-side."[a]

Col. Cooke refers to these conditions in his "Conquest of New Mexico:"[b] "A great many of my men are wholly without shoes, and used every expedient, such as rawhide moccasins and sandals, and even wrapping their feet in pieces of woolen and cotton cloth." Of the march on the 16th of January the Colonel remarks: "Near eleven, [A. M] I reached, with the foremost wagon, the first water of the Carriso [Cooke's spelling is 'Cariza']; a clear running stream gladdened the eyes, after the anxious dependence on muddy wells for five or six days I found the march [i. e. of the day] to be nineteen miles; thus without water for near three days, (for the working animals) and camping two nights in succession, without water, the battalion made in forty-eight hours, four marches, of eighteen, eight, eleven and nineteen miles, suffering from frost, and from summer heat."[c]

Of the march of the 17th, he said: "The men arrived here, [Carriso Creek camp] completely worn down; they staggered as they marched, as they did yesterday, [the 18th:] Some of the men did not find strength to reach

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[a] Tyler, pp. 244-5.
[b] Cooke's Conquest, p. 185.
[c] Ibid, p. 184.

the camp before daylight this morning. * * * I went through the companies this morning; they were eating their last four ounces of flour; of sugar and coffee there has been none for weeks. I have remaining only five public wagons, there are three private property." Yet, as showing the spirit of these Battalion men in such plight he writes of the evening in camp of that same day—"The men, who this morning were prostrate, worn out, hungry, heartless, have recovered their spirits tonight, and are singing and playing the fiddle."[d]

**From Carriso Creek to San Phillips.**—The march from Carriso Creek was to San Phillips, an Indian village on a small stream of the same name. It was on approaching San Phillips that the rugged heart of the coast mountains was encountered, "which seemed to defy aught save the wild goat," according to Col. Cooke's description; over which "with crow bar and pick and axe in hand," he continues, "the Battalion worked its way." Here also the "chasm of living rock, more narrow than their wagons," was encountered, through which they hewed a passage for the wagons, the Colonel himself taking a hand in the hewing. "I came to the canyon," says the Colonel, "and found it much worse than I had been led to expect [i. e. by the report of the guides]; there were many rocks to surmount, but the worst was the narrow pass. Setting the example myself, there was much work done on it before the wagons came; the rock was hewn with axes to increase the opening. I thought it wide enough, and going on, found a hill to be ascended, to avoid a still narrower pass, a great rock had to be broken, before it could be crossed. But when a trial was made, at the first pass,

[d] "Conquest," p. 187.

it was found too narrow by a foot of solid rock. More work was done, and several trials made. The sun was now only an hour high, and it was about seven miles to the first water. I had a wagon taken to pieces, and carried through. Meanwhile, we still hewed and hammered at the mountain side; but the best road tools had been lost. * * * The next wagon body was lifted through, and then the running gear, by lifting one side; then I rode on again, and saw a wagon up the very steep hill, and down again to the canyon. The work on the pass was perseveringly continued, and the last two wagons were pulled through by the mules, with loads undisturbed."

The confused information respecting the state of hostilities, the likelihood of meeting retreating bands of Californians, en route for the Mexican state of Sonora, led the Colonel to renew his march on the 19th in a more strictly military order than he had hitherto followed, and the Battalion, while waiting for the wagons to come up, was exercised on a prairie in military tactics.

The Battalion was under orders to march to San Diego and there join Gen. Kearny. "But communication with that officer was now cut off," writes Colonel Cooke. "By the best information the enemy were concentrated at Los Angeles. The General was marching on it from the south, and Lieutenant-Colonel Fremont approaching from the north; so that a direct march on Los Angeles from the east was evidently the proper course; and especially so, as Captain Montgomery, [from San Diego] had written, January 15th, that it was generally believed that parties of Californians, headed by leaders who had broken their paroles, would endeavor to effect a retreat to Sonora, rather than submit to our arms.

* * * It was determined to take the direct road to Los Angeles; and the guides were sent to Warner's, to collect mules, etc."

**At Warner's Rancho.**—Warner's Ranch was reached on the 21st, the Battalion being again drilled enroute. It was found necessary to rest at Warner's on the 22nd. "This is a beautiful valley, shut in by mountains or high hills on every side," writes Col. Cooke, "The name, Agua Caliente, comes from a bold stream, issuing from rock fissures at the temperature of 170°; it now sends up little clouds of steam for half a mile below. The valley, a mile long, is elliptical, and its green smooth surface really oval; at its centre stands a wonderful evergreen oak, its boughs reaching a circle, five feet above the ground, and ninety feet in diameter; the hot stream runs round one side, a cold one around the other The Indians, of cold nights, select spots below the spring, of agreeable temperature to sleep, lying in the stream, with sod bank for a pillow."[c]

**The March Directed to San Diego.**—On the 23rd of January a march of eighteen miles was made over the hills from Warner's Rancho. It rained several hours in the afternoon, and again at night, then continued for twenty-four hours. "The Battalion had fallen upon the rainy season." All tents were blown down in the night," writes Col. Cooke, speaking of the night of the 23rd. "The ill-crad Battalion," he continues, "were drenched and suffered much." A twelve mile march over the hills from Warner's, on the 25th of January, brought the Battalion into the Temecala valley. There an official dispatch brought to Col. Cooke the announcement that Gen Kearny

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[c]Conquest, p. 193.

had returned to San Diego, and that the Battalion was expected there as originally ordered. Accordingly the next morning the march was directed southward, toward the San Diego mission. The San Luis valley and river was crossed on the 26th, and encampment made near a rancho.

**In Sight of the Pacific.**—About noon the next day the deserted Catholic mission of San Luis Rey was passed. "One mile below the mission," writes Tyler, "we ascended a bluff, when the long- long-looked-for great Pacific Ocean appeared plain to our view, only about three miles distant. The joy, the cheer that filled our souls, none but worn-out pilgrims nearing a haven of rest can imagine. Prior to leaving Nauvoo, we had talked about and sung of 'the great Pacific sea,' and we were now upon its very borders, and its beauty far exceeded our most sanguine expectations."

Of this event Col. Cooke says: "The road wound through smooth green valleys, and over very lofty hills, equally smooth and green. From the top of one of these hills, was caught the first and a magnificent view of the great ocean; and by rare chance, perhaps, it was so calm that it shone as a mirror."

Further describing what must have been to the desert and mountain-worn Battalion a wonderful scene, the Colonel adds: "The charming and startling effect, under our circumstances, of this first view of the ocean could not be expressed; but in an old diary—once sunk and lost in a river—I find what follows:

"I caught my first sight of the ocean, as smooth as a mirror, and reflecting the full blaze of the declining sun; from these sparkling green hill-tops it seemed that the lower world had turned to impalpable dazzling light, while by contrast, the clear sky looked dim.

"We rode on into a valley which was near, but out of view of the sea; its smooth sod was in sunlight and shade; a gentle brook wound through it; the joyous lark, the gay blackbird, the musical bluebird even the household wren, warbled together the evening song; it seemed a sweet domestic scene which must have touched the hearts of my rude, far wanderers. But coming to us so suddenly, there was a marvelous accompaniment;—the fitful roar of tide and surf upon a rock-bound shore; while now and then some great troller burst upon the rocks with a booming thunder. It was not a discord."[f]

From this point the march was down the coast, for the most part in sight of the ocean, in "clear bright sunlight." The Battalion no longer suffered from "the monotonous hardships of the deserts and cold atmosphere of the snow-capped mountains. January there, seemed as pleasant as May in the northern states.

**San Diego Mission.**—On the 29th of January the Battalion passed into the Solidad Valley, thence by cross roads over high hills, miry from recent rains, "into a firm, regular road" to the Mission of San Diego, encampment being made on the flat about a mile below the old mission buildings, and about four or five miles from the seaport of San Diego. In the evening Col. Cooke rode down to San Diego and reported the arrival of his command on the Pacific. The march of the Mormon Battalion was completed.

**Col. Cooke's Bulletin on the Battalion's March.**—On the 30th of January the following Bulletin was written by the Lieutenant-Colonel commanding, though not read to the Battalion until the 4th of February. It tells in studied military brevity the achievemets and faith-

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[f] Conquest, p. 195—note.

fulness of the Battalion, its service to the country, and is an imperishable monument in the literature of the nation.

## BULLETIN.

"Headquarters Mormon Battalion,
"Mission of San Diego,
"January 30, 1847.

"(Orders No. 1).

"The Lieutenant-Colonel commanding, congratulates the Battalion on their safe arrival on the shore of the Pacific Ocean, and the conclusion of their march of over two thousand miles.

"History may be searched in vain for an equal march of infantry. Half of it has been through a wilderness, where nothing but savages and wild beasts are found, or deserts where, for want of water, there is no living creature. There, with almost hopeless labor, we have dug deep wells, which the future traveler will enjoy. Without a guide who had traversed them we have ventured into trackless tablelands where water was not found for several marches. With crowbar and pick, and axe in hand, we worked our way over mountains, which seemed to defy aught save the wild goat, and hewed a pass through a chasm of living rock more narrow than our wagons. To bring these first wagons to the Pacifice, we have preserved the strength of our mules by herding them over large tracts, which you have laboriously guarded without loss. The garrison of four presidios of Sonora concentrated within the walls of Tucson, gave us no pause. We drove them out, with their artillery, but our intercourse with the citizens was un-

marked by a single act of injustice. Thus, marching half naked and half fed, and living upon wild animals, we have discovered and made a road of great value to our country.

"Arrived at the first settlements of California, after a single day's rest, you cheerfully turned off from the route to this point of promised repose, to enter upon a campaign, and meet, as we supposed, the approach of an enemy; and this, too, without even salt to season your sole subsistence of fresh meat.

"Lieutenants A J. Smith and George Stoneman, of the First Dragoons, have shared and given invaluable aid in all these labors.

"Thus volunteers, you have exhibited some high and essential qualities of veterans. But much remains undone. Soon, you will turn your attention to the drill, to system and order, to forms also, which are all necessary to the soldier.

"By order

[Signed] "Lieut.-Colonel P. St. George Cooke,

[Signed] "P. C. Merrill, Adjutant."[g]

Small wonder, though the reading of this Bulletin to the Battalion was unaccountably delayed for four days, that the Mormon volunteers received this official announcement of their achievements with hearty cheers.

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[g]Cooke's Conquest, p. 197. Subsequently, viz., on the 9th of May, on the occasion of General Kearny visiting the Battalion at Los Angeles, he is reported to have said that history would be searched in vain for an infantry march equal to the Battalion's, and added: "Bonaparte crossed the Alps, but these men have crossed a continent." Tyler's Battalion, p. 282.

## VII.

## THE BATTALION IN CALIFORNIA.

Subsequent movements of the Battalion were as follows:

**At San Luis Rey Mission.**—On the evening of their second day at San Diego Mission, an order was issued for the Battalion to return to San Luis Rey Mission, to garrison that station. This Mission was somewhat midway between Los Angeles and San Diego, and it was doubtless thought that the Battalion by being stationed there could keep that important position out of the enemies' hands, should Mexican hostilities again be resumed, as at the time seemed probable; and they would also be available there for quicker movement either to Los Angeles or to San Diego should danger threaten at either point.

Accordingly on February 1st, the return march was begun and ended about noon of the 3rd.

**Clean Up and Drill.**—Here orders were given for a general clean up of arms and clothes—such as they had—shaving, cutting hair, and the like. Some had not shaved since the march began, and would have preferred not to do so until they returned to their people," says the Battalion's historian. But the order was imperative. "It prescribed that no beard be allowed to grow below the tip of the ear, hence the mustache only could be saved. The hair also must be clipped even with the tip of the ear," hence the long and tangled locks and shocks of hair of a year's growth had to be sacrified.

By the 6th of February the men had finished cleaning up and repairing their quarters, which in some respects even then "were not the most pleasant," writes Tyler, "as we were over-run with fleas, as well as the more filthy vermin, and no person, howevevr cleanly he aimed to be, could escape from them."

On the 8th of February, according to Tyler, Colonel Cooke and Lieutenant Stoneman commenced the squad drill with officers which, continued and extended to companies and thence to the Battalion, and lasted altogether for twenty days, when the Battalion was supposed to have learned the drill, and all the officers were considered capable of teaching it."

**Company B at San Diego.**—On the 15th of February Company B was ordered to be detached from the Battalion and directed to march to the port of San Diego to perform garrison duty at that place, though the order, apparently, for the removal of the company was not given until the 15th of March.

**Los Angeles Garrisoned by Companies A. C. D. E.**—On the 18th of the same month nine privates of Company A, eight from C., five from D., and eight from E., were designated as a detachment, under command of Lieutenant Oman and Sergeant Brown, to garrison the Mission of San Luis Rey, while the remainder of companies A. C. D. and E. were designated to go to Los Angeles for garrison duty. These companies began their march on the 19th, and arrived at Los Angeles on the 23rd. The chief activities here were maintaining by successive details from the command an out-post at Cajon Pass,—fifty miles north east of Los Angeles—as a protection against hostile bands of Indians; and the erection of a fort on an eminence commanding the city of

Los Angeles. The San Luis Rey detachment remained at that post until the 6th of April, when under orders the station was abandoned and the detachment marched to Los Angeles. The companies thus grouped so remained until near the expiration of the term of their enlistment.

**The Conquest of California.**—The conquest of California was easily achieved. Fremont in the north with a company of but sixty Americans, with whom he had been sent to explore portions of New Mexico and California, was opposed in the vicinity of Monterey by a force under General Castro, in June, 1846. With the aid of American settlers in the vicinity of San Francisco, Fremont defeated the Mexicans in two engagements and on the 5th of July, the American Californians declared themselves independent, and placed Fremont at the head of their affairs. On the 7th of the same month Commodore Sloat, then in the command of the U. S. squadron in the Pacific, bombarded and captured Monterey. On the 9th Commodore Montgomery took possession of San Francisco. Commodore Stockton arrived on the 15th of July and in co-operation with Colonel Fremont took possession of the city of Los Angeles, on the 17th of August. There was, however, a subsequent uprising in the south, an attempt of the Mexicans to regain possession of the country. The attempt, however, proved abortive, and was chiefly noteworthy as occurring at such a time as to allow General Kearny's troop of one hundred soldiers, who had marched from Santa Fe, to participate in some of the last engagements—December 16th, 1846, and Jan. 8th, 1847—these ended in the conquest, and brought to pass the pacification of California.

**The Kearny-Fremont Controversy.**—A question of

authority arose between Col. Fremont and General Kearny. The former had acted in the self appointed capacity of "Military Commandant of California" General Kearny refused to recognize him in that capacity, since in addition to being Fremont's superior military officer, Kearny also had been instructed himself to establish civil government in California.[a] Fremont refused to obey the orders of his superior, and was ordered home to be tried for his disobedience. He was deprived of his commission; but in consideration of previous service, it was offered to him again, but refused; and Fremont "went again to the wilderness and engaged in exploration."[b]

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[a]See Letter of Secretary of War to Kearny, Executive Document No. 60, of June 3rd, 1846, delivered to Kearny by Col. Kane.

[b]Lossing's Hist. U. S. p. 487. Bancroft's Hist. of Cal., Vol. V., passim, but especially pp. 411-468.

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## VIII.

## RECORD OF THE BATTALION IN CALIFORNIA.

The Battalion had opened a wagon road to the Pacific, but had arrived too late to participate actively in the conquest of California. It was useful, however, in the performance of garrison duty at San Diego, San Luis Rey, and Los Angeles; and, in connection with the New York volunteers, recently arrived under command of Col. Jonathan D. Stevenson, via Cape Horn to San Francisco Bay, also in connection with the constantly increasing naval forces along the coast, they assisted in making secure the conquest achieved.

While performing garrison duty many members of the Battalion at San Diego obtained permission to accept employment of the inhabitants of the town, such as making adobes, digging wells, building houses, and making bricks. The first bricks in San Diego, and for matter of that in California, were made and burned by members of the Mormon Battalion.[a] They made an enviable reputation for industry and frugality.

**Efforts to Re-Enlist the Battalion.**—As the expiration of the term of the Battalion's enlistment drew near, strong efforts were made for their re-enlistment by General Kearny, before departing for the east in May.

"On the 4th of May," writes Tyler, "an order was read from Col. Cooke, giving the Battalion the privilege of being discharged on condition of being re-enlisted for three years as U. S. Dragoons; but under the circumstances the generous proposition could not consistently

[a] Tyler's Battalion, pp. 286-7.

be accepted" General Kearny addressed the Battalion on the 10th of May: "He sympathized with us in the unsettled condition of our people," says Tyler, "but thought, as their final destination was not definitely settled, [in this of course the General's information was defective] we had better re-enlist for another year, by which time the war would doubtless be ended, and our families settled in some permanent location. In conclusion he said he would take pleasure in representing our patriotism to the President, and in the halls of congress, and give us the justice our praiseworthy conduct had merited." It was on this occasion, according to Tyler, that Gen. Kearny in praising the Battalion said: "Bonaparte crossed the Alps, but these men have crossed a continent."[b]

Col. Jonathan D. Stevenson of the New York volunteers, who succeeded Col. Cooke in command of the Battalion by being given command of the southern district of California—Col. Cooke having been detailed to accompany Kearny on his return to the east—made an effort to induce the Battalion to re-enlist Stevenson's effort was prompted by Governor Richard B. Mason's instructions. Stevenson represented among the advantages of the Battalion's re-enlistment, the privilege of choosing their own officers, "and the fact that the Mormon commander would be the third in rank among the officers of California, and might become first."

The Battalion's officers quite generally favored re-enlistment, but not so the men, who, under the leadership of "Father" Pettegrew, William Hyde, and Sergeant Tyler, were in favor of returning to their families and the body of their people.

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[b]Tyler's Battalion, pp. 281-2.

The result of the effort at re-enlistment was, that a company of eighty-one, officers and men, re-enlisted for six months, and performed garrison service at San Diego.

**Homeward Bound.**—The rest of the Battalion, on being mustered out of service, in July, began their march for the Great Basin of the Rocky Mountains, going via Sutter's Fort, at the juncture of the American and Sacramento rivers, north-eastward from San Francisco about seventy-five miles, and now the site of Sacramento, capital of the state. About one-half of these returning volunteers arrived in Salt Lake Valley on the first of October. The reason for not more than one-half of this number reaching Salt Lake Valley that fall—they numbered about 240 when leaving Los Angeles—arose from the following circumstances: Arriving at Sutter's Fort, and finding opportunity for employment at good wages, a number desired to take advantage of that opportunity, and accordingly, with the consent and approval of their associates, "a few" remained. On the sixth of September, when the returning volunteers were leaving the basin of Lake Tahoe, they met Samuel Brannan,—leader of the "Brooklyn Colony" of Mormons to San Francisco Bay via Cape Horn, in 1846. Brannan was returning to California from his visit to Brigham Young, whom he had met at the Green River Crossing, and accompanied to Salt Lake Valley. He gave the Battalion members a doleful account of the semi-desert region where the Mormon people were settling, and predicted their final removal to California. He urged all, except those known to have families in Salt Lake Valley, to return to California and work until spring. This without avail. The next day, however, the volunteers met Captain James Brown, ranking officer of the Pueblo detachment of the

Battalion, and a small party enroute for California. He brought with him letters from many of the families of the Battalion; also an epistle from the Mormon leaders advising those who had no means of subsistence to remain in California and labor during the winter, and make their way to Salt Lake valley in the spring, bringing their earnings with them. About one-half of the volunteers accepted this suggestion and returned to Sutter's Fort where they found employment.

The rest of the company continued their journey to Salt Lake valley where they arrived at the time already stated.

**The Discharge and Payment of the Pueblo Detachment.**—Captain Brown took with him to California the muster rolls of the Pueblo detachment of the Battalion, and also had a power of attorney from all its members to draw their pay. The Pueblo detachment had drawn its pay per Captain Brown up to May at Santa Fe, at which time he received orders to resume the march to California, via Fort Laramie. The detachment arrived in Salt Lake valley on the 29th of July, where they were disbanded, since the term of their enlistment had expired on the 16th of that month. On the presentation of the claims for the three months' pay still due to this detachment to Governor Mason of California, they were allowed. "Paymaster Rich," says the Governor, "paid to Captain Brown the money due to the (Pueblo) detachment up to that date, according to the rank they bore upon the muster rolls, upon which the Battalion had been mustered out of the service."

**The Purchase of Ogden Site with Battalion Money.**—Sometime early in 1848 the Goodyear claim to a tract of land at the mouth of Weber Canyon, said to be twenty

miles square, was purchased by Captain James Brown out of the Battalion money collected by him, and "by the advice of the Council," meaning the high council at Salt Lake City. The sum paid was $1,950.00, cash down." In this statement I follow the Journal History of Brigham Young, which under date of March 6th, 1848, contains a letter from "Father" John Smith, President of the Salt Lake high council, giving to the Mormon leader,—absent at the time in Winter Quarters—the above information.[c]

The Goodyear tract is specifically described as commencing at the mouth of Weber Canyon, thence following the Wasatch Mountains north to the Hot Springs; thence westward to the shores of the Salt Lake; along the shores southward to a point opposite Weber Canyon; thence eastward to the point of beginning.[d] Goodyear was supposed to have held this tract of land on which Ogden City now stands by virtue of a Mexican grant. This, how-

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[c]Others place the price paid for this tract of land at $3,000.00 (Whitney's History of Utah, Vol. I, p. 375; Bancroft's Utah, p. 307, note 4). I think the statement in John Smith's letter to Brigham Young the more reliable, since the high council over which he presided advised the purchase to be made, and would most likely know the price paid.

There is also some confusion as to the time of the purchase. June 6th, 1848, is the time fixed upon by Jenson's Chronology, 1899 edition, p. 35. Whitney following the Brown family tradition places the time of the purchase late in December, 1847, or early in January, 1848; and the return of Captain Brown from California in December, 1847. Whereas Brigham Young's Journal History—quoting John Smith's letter—referred to above—places the date of the Captain's return "about the middle of November, 1847; and that be brought with him "about $5,000.00, mostly in gold." Others say $10,000.00 in Mexican doubloons. Brown was gone (i. e. from Salt Lake Valley) three months and seven days, History of Brigham Young, Ms. March 6th, 1848, p. 16.

[d]Bancroft's History of Utah, p. 307, note 3; he cites Stanford's "Ogden City." Ms. p. 1, and F. D. Richards' Narrative, Ms. Both are reliable sources of information.

ever, it was subsequently discovered, was not the case. Goodyear's title amounted to no momre than a squatter's claim, as there were evidently no Mexican grants of land in the eastern and northern parts of the territory ceded to the United States by Mexico that rested upon any clearly valid evidence of title from Mexico; and the government of the United States, in subsequent years, refused to recognize the so-called Mexican grant of Goodyear's, and held that title inhered in the government of the United States alone, and that by virtue of the cession of the territory to the United States.

Such title, however, as Goodyear claimed, was purchased, as above related, and by Battalion money. And while the title of Goodyear was not valid, the purchase quit-claimed his title, such as it was, and gave a sense of security to the colonists who first settled upon one of the most desirable tracts of land in the Salt Lake Valley.

**The Battalion's Contribution of Seeds to Utah Colonies.**—These returning members of the Battalion brought to Utah various kinds of garden and fruit seeds, as well as grain from California, all which were found to be very useful in the new colonies where both variety and quantity of seeds were limited. Lieutenant James Pace introduced the club-head wheat, which proved to be hardy and of thrifty growth in Utah soil. Daniel Tyler brought the California pea which in the early years grew so prolific as the field pea of Utah. The detached members of the Battalion who wintered at Pueblo brought with them to Salt Lake Valley the variety of wheat known as "taos," which, mixed with the club-head, became for many years the staple seed wheat sown in Utah fields.

**The Battalion's Part in the Discovery of Gold in California.**—As already stated a number of the Mormon

Battalion members found employment at Sutter's Fort, with Mr. John Sutter himself, in fact, who was a rather enterprising Swiss; one "who had houses and land, flocks and herds, mills and machinery. He counted his skilled artisans by the score," says the account I am following, "and his savage retainers by the hundred. He was, moreover, a man of progress." Among his pressing needs and the needs of the country at large, was a saw mill. The flour mills he then had in course of construction needed timbers, and there would be large profit in shipping lumber to San Francisco. Accordingly his foreman, a Mr. James W. Marshall, a native of New Jersey, and then about thirty-three years of age, and a carpenter, took in hand the task of building a saw mill. After considerable exploration the requisite combination of water power, timber, and the possibility of easy access to the Fort, was found in the Coloma valley, on the south fork of the American River, and about forty-five miles due east of the Fort.

In the latter part of August, or the first of September, Mr. Marshall with a party of about a dozen white men, nine of whom were discharged members of the Mormon Battalion,[e] and about as many Indians, went to Coloma valley and began the construction of the proposed mill. A brush dam was built in the river and a

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[e]Their names given by Bancroft are as follows—I add the given names: Henry W. Bigler, Alexander Stephens, James S. Brown, James Barger, William Johnson, Azariah Smith, William Ira Willis, Sidney Willis, (Brothers) William Koutze (History of California, Vol. VI., p. 31, note). The brothers Willis and Koutze returned in September to work on Sutter's flour mill, so they were not in the Coloma valley at the time of the gold discvery. Israel Evans is given in addition to the above by James S. Brown in his "California Gold, an Authentic History," p. 6. (Hist. Cal., Vol. V., p. 31, note.)

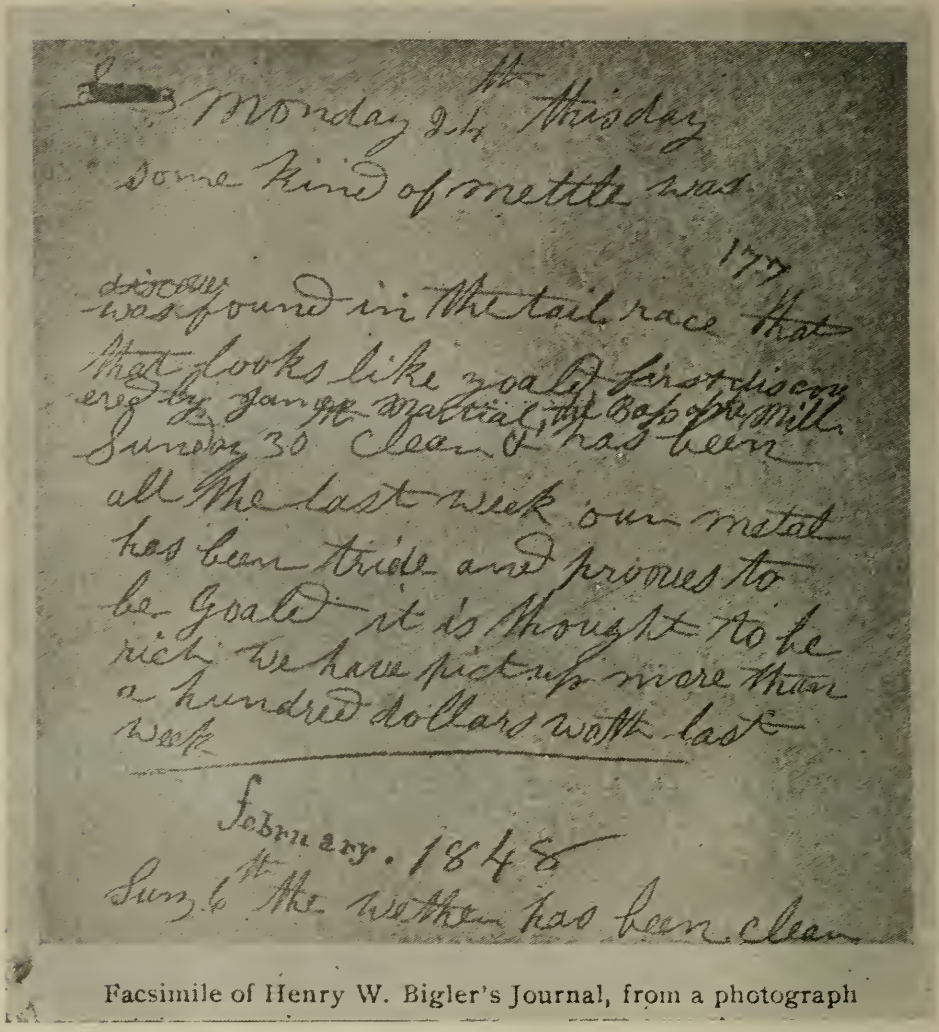
mill race constructed along a dry channel, to economize labor. The largest stones were thrown out of this and during the night the water would be turned in to carry off the dirt and sand. On the 24th of January "while sauntering along the tail race inspecting the work, Mr. Marshall noticed yellow particles mingled with the excavated earth, which had been washed by late rains. Sending an Indian to his cabin for a tin plate Marshall washed out some of the soil and obtained a small quantity of yellow metal. During the evening he remarked to his associates of the camp that he believed he had found gold, which was received with some doubts, the expressions being "I reckon not;" and, "no such luck." But Henry W. Bigler, one of the Battalion members, made the following entry in his journal that day:

"Monday 24 (January): This day some kind of metal was found in the tail race that looks like gold."

"Jan 30th: Clear, and has been all the last week. Our metal has been tried and proves to be gold. It is thought to be rich. We have picked up more than a hundred dollars' worth this week."

**The Date of the Discovery of Gold.**—Thus it is the journal of a member of the Mormon Battalion which determines the date of the event which startled the world. Usually the 19th of January is given as the date, but in his History of California, Bancroft discusses the subject as follows:

"The 19th of January is the date usually given; but I am satisfied it is incorrect. There are but two authorities to choose between, Marshall, the discoverer, and one Henry W. Bigler, a Mormon engaged upon the work at the time. Besides confusion of mind in other respects, Marshall admits that he does not know the date On or


Monday 24th Thursday
Some kind of mettle was
discovered
was found in the tail race that
that looks like goald first discov
ered by James Marshall at Sutters Mill
Sunday 30 Clear & has been
all the last week our metal
has been tride and proves to
be Goald it is thought to be
rich we have picked up more than
a hundred dollars worth last
week
February. 1848
Sun. 6th The weather has been clear

Facsimile of Henry W. Bigler's Journal, from a photograph

about the 19th of January," he says (Hutchings' Magazine, II, 200); "I am not quite certain to a day, but it was between the 18th and 20th." Whereupon the 19th has been generally accepted. Bigler, on the other hand, was a cool, clear-headed, methodical man; moreover he kept a journal, in which he entered occurrences on the spot, and it is from this journal I get my date. If further evidence be wanting, we have it. Marshall states that four days after the discovery he proceeded to New Hel-

vetta [identical as to the location with Sutter's Fort] with specimens. Now, by reference to another journal, New Helvetta Diary, we find that Marshall arrived at the Fort on the evening of the 28th. If we reckon the day of discovery as one of the four days, allow Marshall one night on the way, which Parsons gives him, and count the 28th one day, we have the 24th as the date of discovery trebly proved."

**The Tide of Western Civilization Started.**—The discovery of gold is the historical event that turned the eyes of the civilized world to California. Within a year it started that mighty wave of western emigration from all parts of the United States, many parts of Europe, and even from Asia. It was to be a subject of the President's message to Congress before the close of the year; within two years it would make California one of the sovereign states of the American Union, with a population of nearly one hundred thousand; in seven years it would result in adding nearly five hundred million dollars to the world's store of gold; and then as the gold from soil and sand was exhausted, and costly operations upon gold-bearing quartz ledges, and delving into the earth were required to secure the precious metal, many men who had come to the mines turned their attention to agriculture and to horticulture and found in the grain fields, vineyards and orchards of the Pacific slope, even a greater source of wealth than in the gold mines.

For a time an effort was made to keep the discovery of gold quiet, but gradually it became known, and the secret of the Sierras was revealed to the world, with the result already noted. San Francisco, however, was indifferent for some time, the final conversion of that town to the discovery of gold did not take place until Samuel

Brannan, the leader of the Brooklyn Colony of Mormons to California, came down from Sutter's Fort—where he had a store—to San Francisco, in company with a number of others who had with them specimens of collected gold in both dust and nuggets. Brannan, holding in one hand a bottle of yellow dust, and with the other swinging his hat, rushed down the street shouting, "Gold! Gold! Gold! from the American River." This in May; and soon afterwards San Francisco was deserted for the gold-fields.

**The Mormon Battalion "Diggings" on the American River.**—The spare time of the Mormons at Sutter's saw-mill was devoted to washing out gold in the mill-race and from the deposits of the sand bars along the river. Henry Bigler on the 21st of February wrote to members of the Battalion at Sutter's Fort, telling them of the discovery of gold, but cautioned them to impart the information only to those who could be relied upon to keep the secret. They entrusted it to three other members of the Battalion. Six days later three of the number, Sidney Willis, Levi Fifield, and Wilford Hudson, came up to the saw-mill, and frankly told Mr. Sutter they had come to search for gold, and he gave them permission to mine in the tail of the millrace. The next day they began work and were fairly successful. Hudson picked out one piece of gold worth six dollars. After a few days, however, these men felt under obligations to return to the Fort as they had given it out that they were merely going to the saw-mill on a visit and a few days' shooting. Returning, Willis and Hudson followed down the stream for the purpose of prospecting. Fifield, accompanied by Bigler, followed the wagon road. About half way between the saw-mill and the Fort, Hudson and Willis,

on a bar opposite a little island in the river, found a small quantity of gold, not more than half a dollar in value; and while the smallness of the find filled the two prospectors with disgust, the other Battalion members at the fort insisted upon being taken to the point where the gold had been found, that "together they might examine the place.' "It was with difficulty that they prevailed upon them to do so," remarks Bancroft; but finally Willis and Hudson consented, "and the so lately slighted spot," continues the historian of California, "presently became famous as the rich 'Mormon Diggins:' the island, 'Mormon Island,' taking its name from these Battalion boys who had first found gold there."

But notwithstanding this new discovery by these members of the Battalion, and notwithstanding their development of the discovery of Mr. Marshall, and the huge excitement which followed, and the fact that whenever they could get released a day from their duty to their employer they could usually obtain in gold several times over their day's wages, history has to record that they were true to their engagement to Mr. Sutter. "They had promised Sutter," says Bancroft, "to stand by him and finish the saw mill, this they did, starting it running on the 11th of March. Henry Bigler was still there. On the 7th of April Bigler, Stephens and Brown presented themselves at the fort to settle accounts with Sutter."

**The Call of Duty.**—The call of duty was also pressing upon these Battalion men from another direction. The instructions from the Mormon leaders, to the members of the Battalion, as we have seen, was that they should remain in California during the winter, but make their way to the Salt Lake Valley in the spring, bringing their earnings with them. Hence when settling with

Sutter on the 7th of April, the preliminaries were arranged for this prospective journey to the Great Basin of the Rocky Mountains. The first of June was fixed upon as the time of their departure. Notice was given to Sutter accordingly, so that by that time he could replace the Mormon workmen in his employ by others. Horses, cattle and the seeds they intended taking with them were to be bought of him; also two brass cannons to be a defense against possible Indian attacks enroute, and for defensive use against a like foe in Salt Lake valley. At first a company of eight went into the mountains to explore a route, but found the snow too deep for passage at that time. The constantly growing gold excitement, also, in consequence of its general unsettling of things, delayed their departure a month beyond the time fixed upon for starting. Meantime many of the Battalion members availed themselves of the opportunity to search for gold. Bigler and two others of the Battalion followed up the American river from the Fort about fifteen miles, finding gold as they went. Arriving at Mormon Island they came upon the seven members of the Battalion mining there who that day had taken out two hundred and fifty dollars. Bigler and his associates mined for two months about one mile below the saw-mill, dividing with Sutter and Marshall, who furnished tools and provisions. The land owners demanded one-half the product for a time; this was finally reduced to one-third.

In the midst of this prosperous mining activity, and the daily growing gold fever, the mad rush from San Francisco and other parts of California, the members of the Battalion sought out a rendezvous for their gathering preparatory to the journey across the mountains. The

place of rendezvous was called by them "Pleasant Valley," near the present site of Placerville, a short distance up the south fork of the American river, and not far from the place where gold was first discovered on that stream. Patrties came in one after another until the 3rd of July, when about forty-five men and one woman, the wife of one of the party, had assembled, bringing with them wagons, horses, cattle, and other effects. On the 3rd a start was made. "As the wagons rolled up along the divide between the American river and the Cosumnes, on the national 4th," writes H H. Bancroft, "their cannon thundered independence before the high Sierras." "Thus," as further remarked by the author here followed, "amidst the scenes now every day becoming more and more absorbing, bringing to the front the strongest passions in man's nature, * * * at the call of what they deemed duty, these devotees of their religion unhesitatingly laid down their wealth-winning implements, turned their back on what all the world was just then making ready with hot haste and mustered strength to grasp at, and struggle for, and marched through new toils and dangers to meet their exiled brethren in the desert."

The fame of having discovered gold may not be claimed for members of the Mormon Battalion, that belongs to Mr. Marshall, unquestionably, though the Mormons in camp when it was found, of white men, were in the majority; and the shovels in their industrious hands it was which threw up the gold-laden soil; and they were the first to extend the discovery; and theirs the honors to first chronicle the date and fact of the event that was to mean so much to the Pacific coast of America, and to the world. But while the honor of making the mere dis-

covery of gold may not be claimed for them, that which is infinitely better may be claimed for them, the honor of writing into the annals of California and of the world's history this fine example of fidelity to duty, detailed above; and which is not over-matched in any of the records written by men.

**Ascent of the Sierras from the Western Side.**—It was a difficult task to cut a wagon road from the west side through the lofty Sierras that faced them. A task of infinite toil and in the presence of great danger from the lurking savages. Three pioneers who had insisted upon going in advance to blaze the route for the main company had been murdered by the Indians These pioneers were named Daniel Browett, Ezra H. Allen, and Henderson Cox. The main camp came upon their mutilated bodies at a spring which, because of this event, still bears the name "Tragedy Spring." What numbers of these savages the main company would encounter, what their mood would be—murderous or friendly—of course could not be conjectured, it was of the dangers they must risk. By almost incredible toil and patience, however, this company of Mormon Battalion men conquered the ascent of the Sierras from the western side, hewing a roadway for their seventeen wagons through stony heights, and in like manner down steep declivities and narrow gorges, until the eastern sloping deserts beyond were reached, and finally the valley of the Great Salt Lake,—about the first of October, 1848,—to them, for the time, the place to which duty had called them.

**Wagon Trail From Los Angeles to Salt Lake.**—The company that re-enlisted at Los Angeles for six months beyond the Battalion's original term of enlistment, served

eight months and then were mustered out of the service. Some of these on being disbanded went by way of the coast to the mines or engaged in other industries in California for a time, but most of them finally made their way to Salt Lake valley in the course of one or two years, though a few remained permanently in California. A squad of twenty-five from this comany, however, on being mustered out of the service, organized at once for the journey to Salt Lake valley, taking with them one wagon and a band of one hundred and thirty-five mules. They went by way of what was called the "southern route;" hitherto, however, traveled only by packers, and the wagon of this Battalion company was the first to make the journey over the pack trail. This company reached Salt Lake valley on the 5th of June, 1848.

**Evidence of Appreciation of the Battalion's Services.**—The best evidence that the service of the Mormon Battalion was honorable and appreciated by both the people of California and the U S. government, exists in the fact of the efforts that were made on the part of both the people and the government to prolong their service, some of which efforts have already been noted in these pages. As the time approached for the company that had re-enlisted to be mustered out of service—known as the "Company of Mormon Volunteers."—the people of San Diego drafted a petition, begging the governor to use his influence to keep the company in the service. The petition was signed by every citizen in the town, and Governor Mason tried hard to induce the company to remain in the service another year; failing in that, then to stay six months longer; all to no purpose, however; the "Volunteers" were determined to join their friends

and families in Salt Lake valley, and made the journey as stated above.

**Efforts to Raise a Second Mormon Battalion.**—When the Battalion proper was mustered out of service in July, 1847, efforts were set on foot at that time to raise a second "Mormon Battalion," of which Captain Jefferson Hunt was to be given the command, with the office of Lieutenant-Colonel, the office held by its first commander Allen, and later by Col. Cooke. It is learned from a report made by Governor Mason that the war department, and hence the national administration, also sought the enlistment of this second Battalion.

In his report to the Adjutant General of September 18th, 1847, Governor Mason says:

"Of the service of this Battalion, of their patience, subordination, and general good conduct, you have already heard; and I take great pleasure in adding that as a body of men they have religiously respected the rights and feelings of these conquered people, and not a syllable of complaint has reached my ears of a single insult offered or outrage done by a Mormon volunteer. So high an opinion did I entertain of the battalion and of their special fitness for the duties now performed by the garrisons in this country, that I made strenuous efforts to engage their service for another year."[f]

The month following, after Governor Mason had met Captain Brown of the Pueblo detachment, and received his report, and paid off that division of the command; also after Captain Hunt, who had been for some

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[f] Cal. and New Mexico Mess. and Doc. 1850; also quoted by Bancroft Hist. Cal. Vol. V., p. 492.

time acting as Indian agent at Luis del Rey, was well on his way to Salt Lake valley to raise the proposed 2nd Battalion of Mormon Volunteers, Governor Mason wrote to Washington:

"Captain Brown (after making his report and receiving the pay of the Pueblo detachment) started immediately for Fort Hall. * * * He reported that he had met Captain Hrnt, late of the Mormon Battalion, who was on his way to meet the emigrants and bring into the country this winter, if possible, a battalion, according to the terms offered in my letter to him of the 16th of August, a copy of which you will find among the military correspondence of the department. In my letter I offered Captain Hunt, the command of the battalion, with the rank of lieutenant-colonel, with an adjustant; but I find, by the orders lately received, that a battalion of four companies is only entitled to a major and acting adjutant. I will notify Captain Hunt of this change at as early a moment as I can communicate with him. I am pleased to find by the despatches that in this matter I have anticipated the wish of the department"[g]

When, however, the subject of raising a second Battalion was presented to Brigham Young, both through Col. Jonathan D. Stevenson, of the New York regiment of volunteers, prompted by Governor Mason, also through Captain Hunt in person, the proposition was declined. Regarding the first enlistment from the standpoint alone of the sacrifices it involved, President Young saw no occasion to make like sacrifices a second time, and no effort was made in Utah to raise a second Mormon Battalion.

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[g]Cal. and New Mex. Mess. and Doc. 1850, p. 355. Also quoted by Bancroft Hist. Cal., Vol. V., p. 494, note.

## IX.

## THE BATTALION IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF SEVENTY-THREE YEARS.

The story of the Mormon Battalion is now before the reader. The perspective of seventy-three years corrects many of the misapprehensions that once obtained respecting the purpose of its being called, and its mission. And as this perspective corrects the misconceptions of the past, so also does it enable us to recognize the real importance and value of the incident and the greatness of the achievements of this Battalion of the United States' troops, for such they were, and the matter of their coming from the westward migrating camps of the Mormon people should not be allowed to obscure that fact.

**The Battalion as Utah Pioneers.**—Also it should be always held in mind that the members of the Battalion were among the pioneers and founders of the state of Utah. For though the main body of the Battalion went to California its members were never for a day separated in thought or purpose from the main body of their people, whom they had assisted in their westward-moving pilgrimage by the means sent to them from their pay; both from Fort Leavenworth and from Santa Fe; the seeds and the tents and arms equipment they brought with them when returning from their historic march; and the newly mined gold for currency. All of which was so helpful in founding the commonwealth to be, to say nothing of the advantage their service in the

army of the west had been to their people in securing the effective element in the plea for their right to occupy Indian lands along the Missouri river in Iowa and Nebraska. Besides one hundred and fifty of their number with their tents, arms, teams, wagons and other equipment, quartered at Pueblo during the winter of 1846-7, followed so closely upon the heels of the first company of pioneers led by Brigham Young, that they arrived in the Salt Lake Valley only five days after the advent of the first pioneer company.

**Achievements of the Battalion.**—Four great movements made possible the development of the west—the great intermountain region and the Pacific slope. These were:

1. The opening of the highways;
2. The conquest of northern Mexico;
3. The discovery of gold in California;
4. The adoption of irrigation farming by an Anglo-Saxon people.

In all of these movements the Battalion was an important factor.

The part of the Battalion took in opening the highways to the Pacific has already been detailed in the story of their march, and fully recognized in the military order already quoted in these pages, and which is now on file as a government document in Washington.

**Territory Added to the United States by the Conquest of Mexico.**—"In all," says a reliable authority, "more than five hundred and ninety thousand square miles were added to the territory of the United States as a result of the [Mexican] war." This included the west half of what is now the State of New Mexico, the west half of Colorado, all of Utah, Nevada, Arizona and Cali-

fornia. For this territory, which equaled in extent two-thirds of the territory of the thirteen original states of the Union, the government paid Mexico $15,000,000. "Including Texas," says the authority here followed, "the additions of territory were more than nine hundred and sixty-five thousand square miles."[a] Or, as another historian states it, "territory equal in area to Germany, France and Spain added together."[b]

**The Gadsden Purchase and the Battalion Route.**—Commenting on the Battalion's march and the map he made of it, Colonel Cooke says: "A new administration, (this was the Pierce administration, 1853-1857) in which southern interests prevailed, with the great problem of the practicability and best location of a Pacific railroad under investigation, had the map of this wagon route before them with its continuance to the west, and perceived that it gave exactly the solution of its unknown element, that a southern route would avoid both the Rocky Mountains and Sierra Nevada, with their snows, and would meet no obstacle in this great interval. The new 'Gadsden Treaty' was the result: it was signed December 30, 1853." This purchase added to the territory of the United States forty-five thousand five hundred and thirty-five square miles; for which was paid $10,000,000. The purchase was made by James Gadsden of South Carolina, minister to Mexico, hence the name Gadsden Purchase.[c]

In addition to the wagon road opened westward through southern New Mexico, Arizona, and California,

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[a] History U. S. (Morris), 1877 ed., p. 326.

[b] History of the U. S. (Fiske), 1877 ed., p. 336.

[c] Conquest of Mexico and California—Cooke, p. 159. Also History of the United States—Morris, p. 326.

we have seen that it was a detachment of twenty-five discharged members of the Battalion which brought the first wagon through from the coast via Cajon Pass to Salt Lake Valley, following what is now the general course of the San Pedro, Los Angeles and Salt Lake railroad, and which became known in the early Utah-California times as the southern California route to the coast. Also, as we have seen, the Battalion members returning from the gold fields of the American river region cut a new wagon road, much of the way, for their seventeen wagons and two cannons from the western side of the Sierra, across the summit of that lofty range, thence down to the eastern sloping deserts of Nevada, and so to Salt Lake Valley.

The conquest of Northern Mexico, including, of course, California and Utah, as well as New Mexico and lence of their conduct, not only on the march to the Pacific fleet of the American navy, and the "Army of the West," the main division of which was under the command of General Stephen W. Kearny. The Battalion's part in the conquest is detailed in the foregoing narrative, and also is acknowledged in the military order by Col. Cooke, referred to several times and given in full in a preceding page of this book.

In addition to all this, the Battalion reflected great credit upon the community of Utah pioneers—of whom it never ceased to be a part—by reason of the excellence of their conduct not only on the march to the Pacific coast, but also when doing garrison duty in southern California. The efforts to secure the re-enlistment of the Battalion, and, failing that, the effort to secure the enlistment of a second Mormon Battalion, were the conscious confessions of both California and federal officials

—since both participated in such efforts—to the worth of these United States soldiers. "They religiously respected their rights and feelings of the conquered people of California; not a syllable of complaint of a single insult offered, or any outrage done by a Mormon volunteer," is the record of the Battalion, and the re-enlisted volunteers, according to the report of them by Governor Mason. Such the reputation of the Battalion; of its officers, chosen from its ranks; and of its men, the rank and file.

The part the Battalion in the discovery of gold has already been detailed.

**Connection with Irrigation.**—The connection of members of the Battalion with the introduction of irrigation among an Anglo-Saxon people, and most likely coming from their suggestion, is a deduction from circumstances rather than a fact sustained by direct and positive proof. When Brigham Young's company of pioneers were about to leave Green River on July 4, 1847, they were overtaken by a detachment of thirteen men from the Battalion, who were in pursuit of men who had stolen horses from their camps some seven days' travel eastward. These men had been with the several invallided detachments from the Battalion—about 150 in all—that had wintered at Pueblo, in what is now the state of Colorado. They were incorporated into the pioneer company and came on with it to Salt Lake valley, and undoubtedly members of this group would be upon the ground that 23rd day of July, when ploughing was first attempted on the south fork of City Creek, on the present site of Great Salt Lake City.

The annals of that day say that the ground was so dry and hard that in the attempt to plow it several plows

were broken. Whereupon, at someone's suggestion—who it was that made it the annals do not disclose, and it is not known—a company was set at work to put in a dam in the creek and flood the land in order to plow it. This was the beginning of Anglo-Saxon irrigation.

As already stated, who it was that made the fortunate suggestion that the water be turned out upon the land in order to make it possible to plow it, is not known, but we have seen that thirteen members of the Battalion were among the pioneers, and some of them had seen irrigation in operation among the Mexicans at Santa Fe and further south in the valley of the Rio Grande. What more likely than that some of those men who had seen irrigation in progress should suggest the flooding of the land to prepare it for plowing, as they had seen it conducted over the land to convey moisture to the growing vegetation? The probability of it has moral certainty.

Philip St George Cook

## X.

## THE SUBSEQUENT DISTINCTION ACHIEVED BY THE BATTALION'S COMMANDING OFFICERS.

It may be of interest, and certainly it belongs to the history of the Battalion, to say that its commanding officer and the two lieutenants of the regular army, his staff officers, rose later to honorable distinction during the war between the States.

**Colonel Cooke.**—Col. Cooke, after returning to the east with Stephen W. Kearny, continued in the military service of the United States and was active in the Kansas-Nebraska troubles of the early fifties. In 1857-8 he commanded the cavalry in the Johnston expedition to Utah; and it is of record that when that command passed through the tsreets of Salt Lake City, en route from the mouth of Emigration Canyon to the place of its encampment west of the Jordan, the Colonel rode with uncovered head, through the city; "out of respect to the brave men of the Mormon Battalion he had commanded in their march to the Pacific."

For a time after the departure of Albert Sidney Johnston for the east, or rather to the south,—for that officer espoused the cause of the Southern Confederacy, against the Union, Col. Cooke for a time was in command of "Johnston Army" at Camp Floyd, in Cedar Valley, west of Utah Lake.

During the Civil War Col. Cooke though a Virginian served on the side of the Union army, and rose through

the grade of brigadier general 1861), to the rank of brevet Major General (1865).

**Lieut. A. J. Smith.**—Lieutenant A. J. Smith in the same war rose from the grade of commander of California volunteers to that of brigadier general of volunteers (1862); and to major general of volunteers (1864). In the battle of Nashville he commanded the sixteenth corps of General Thomas' right, and received the brevet of major general in the regular army for his services in that battle.

**Lieut. George Stoneman.**—Lieutenant George Stoneman in 1861 was in command at Fort Brown, Texas, with the rank of captain. Later he was in command of the Union cavalry in the Peninsula campaign. After the death of General Philip Kearny, at Chantilly, Stoneman took the command of the fallen general's division, and commanded the Third Corps at Fredericksburg. At Chancellorsville he commanded the federal cavalry. In a raid upon Andersonville, the object of which was to liberate the federal soldiers imprisoned there, he was captured by the confederates. After the war he was in command of one of the many military departments created by the government; and from 1883 to 1887 was governor of California.

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## XI.

## ANECDOTES.

Col. Cooke in addition to natural austerity of temperment was a strict disciplinarian, and generally held himself aloof from the men. A few anecdotes that fortunately survived the march, and which were related by Wilford Woodruff at the celebration of Pioneer's Day, in 1880, show the Colonel in some of his better moods, and witness the fact that he could be somewhat broadly tolerant of the independent attitude of some members of his Mormon command. The Woodruff narratives follow:

**Character of Col. Cooke.**—"Those who marched with him (Colonel Cooke) can understand him much better than I can describe him. I think he possessed a better heart than his language would sometimes indicate. He was a strict disciplinarian, and, like Lord Nelson, expected every man to do his duty. But he had a peculiar streak in his composition at times that induced him to see how far the Mormon Battalion would go in obeying his commands and that were inconsistent with reason and good judgment. As an illustration of this, for the edification or amusement of the remnant of the Battalion who are present, I will refer to a few incidents, and if I do not get everything as it transpired, I will get it as nearly as I can, from the report of those who were present.

**Col. Cooke and Christopher Layton.**—"On one occasion, while the Battalion was crossing a river with a ferry-boat, Col. Cooke was sitting on his mule on the

bank looking at them. The boat went down into such deep water that the setting poles did not touch bottom. 'Try the upper side,' said he. They did so, but could not touch bottom. The colonel then took off his hat and said: 'Good bye, gentlemen. When you get down to the Gulf of California, give my respects to the folks.' He then rode off and left them, not waiting to see whether they would reach shore or go down the river. He soon returned and found that they had got ashore. While sitting there, Christopher Layton rode up to the river on a mule to let it drink. Col. Cooke said to him, 'Young man, I want you to ride across the river and carry a message for me to Capt. Hunt.' It being natural for the men to obey the Colonel's order, he [Layton] tried to ride into the river, but he had gone but a few steps before his mule was going in all over. So Brother Layton stopped. The colonel halloed out, 'Go on, young man; go on, young man.' But Brother Layton, on a moment's reflection, was satisfied that if he attempted it both he and his mule would stand a good chance to be drowned. The colonel himself was satisfied of the same. So Brother Layton turned his mule and rode off, saying, as he came out, 'Colonel, I'll see you in hell before i will drown myself and mule in that river.' The colonel looked at him a moment, and said to the by-standers, 'What is that man's name?' 'Christopher Layton, sir.' 'Well, he is a saucy fellow.'"

**Col. Cooke and Lot Smith.**—On another occasion, (while the Battalion was at Santa Fe) Col. Cooke ordered Lot Smith to guard a Mexican corral, and having a company of United States cavalry camped by, he told Lot if the men came to steal the poles to bayonet them. The men came and surrounded the corral, and while Lot was guarding one side, they would hitch to a pole on the

other, and ride off with it. When the Colonel saw the poles were gone, he asked Lot why he did not obey orders and bayonet the thieves? Lot replied, "If you expect me to bayonet United States troops for taking a pole on the enemy's ground to make a fire of, you mistake your man." Lot expected to be punished, and he was placed under guard, but nothing further was done about it.

**The Colonel, the Mule and Bigler.**—"Col. Cooke called upon W. H. Bigler as a provost guard one day to guard his tent. The colonel had a favorite mule, which was fed some grain on a blanket. One of the freight mules came up and helped to eat the grain. The Colonel drove him off several times, but he would follow him again, until the colonel got vexed, and said to Bigler, 'Is your musket loaded?' 'No sir.' 'Then load it and give it to me' Brother Bigler is the last man on earth that any one acquainted with him would have supposed would have played any tricks on the colonel. But he took out a cartridge and bit off the ball end, which he dropped on the ground. He then rammed the powder and paper down the gun, capped it and handed it to the colonel. Several of the officers of the Battalion stood looking on. As the mule came back to get the grain and had arrived within a rod of him, the colonel fired the charge into its face; but the only effect that it had upon the mule was to cause it to give a snort, wheel around and kick at him, and then run off a few rods, after which it turned to come back again. This created a good deal of amusement with the lookers on. The only remark the colonel made, as he handed back the musket to Brother Bigler, was, 'Young man, that gun was not properly loaded.'

**Wire, Wire, Damn You Sir.**—"Col. Cooke had rather more sternness than familiarity in him. When he gave an order, if he was not fully understood by the soldiers, they did not like to question him. On one occasion he wanted some wire to fix up his tent. He ordered one of the soldiers to go to a certain man and get some wire, but he did not speak plainly and the soldier did not understand what he said. Nevertheless the soldier started to go on the errand, but began to think that he could not tell what to ask for. So he went back to the colonel and asked him what he had told him to get. The colonel said, 'Wire, wire, wire, damn you sir.' The soldier went to the man and asked for some wire for Col. Cooke. But the man had not got any wire. 'What did you ask for?' inquired the colonel, when the man returned. 'I asked for wire, wire, wire, damn you sir.' 'That will do, that will do, young man. You may go to your tent.'

**Col. Cooke's Respect for the Battalion.**—"These instances show a little of the kind of temperament Col. Cooke possessed, but he had a good, generous heart. He entertained great respect for the Mormon Battalion and he always spoke kindly of them before the government and all men. When he went through Salt Lake City with Col A. S. Johnston, in 1858, he uncovered his head in honor of the Mormon Battalion, that five hundred brave men that he had led two thousand miles over sandy deserts and through rocky canyons, in the midst of thirst, hunger, and fatigue, in the service of their country. May God bless Col. Cooke; and may he bless the Battalion and their posterity after them."[a]

[a] Wilford Woodruff in "Utah Pioneers"—1880—pp. 20-22.

# ADDENDA.

## THE BATTALION'S MONUMENT.

The March and Achievements of the Mormon Battalion are worthy of celebration in an enduring form that shall perpetuate the memory of them to future generations. This has been recognized for many years and the idea of such a memorial has been kept alive in the community by a women's organization known as the Daughters of the Mormon Battalion, composed of direct female descendants of the men of that organization. Of late years the interest has taken on a wider scope, until now the whole state of Utah and the surrounding intermountain states have become awakened to the duty of properly commemorating by a Monument, this unique event in the history of our country and of the Utah pioneers.

**The State of Utah Mormon Battalion Monument Commission.**—This awakened sense of duty led to the creation of the State of Utah Mormon Battalion Monument Commission, by the twelfth legislature of the State of Utah. It is instructed to proceed with the erection of a monumen upon the capitol grounds to commemorate the important contribution made to the early settlement of the state of Utah and the western portion of the United States by the Mormon Battalion.

The appointment of this commission and the mandate given to it were the sequence of an act of the previous legislature (the eleventh), which had appointed a former

commission of seven citizens to investigate the subject of such a monument, choose a site for it upon the capitol grounds, select a design and report to the legislature next succeeding. Accordingly a site was selected a competition held in which the architects and the sculptors of Utah and also of the United States were invited to participate, and in which prominent sculptors and architects from the whole country did participate, submitting plans and models of their designs, from which a committee composed of Utah's prominent artists and architects selected three as winning first, second and third places, respectively, and to which were awarded cash prizes as per terms of the competition. Acting upon the judgment of this committee the design accorded first place was recommended by the Monument Committee to the twelfth legislature and an appropriation of one hundred thousand dollars asked for, not to be available, however, before 1920, and only when a like amount of money should be raised from other sources.

The report of the first committee resulted, as before stated, in the appointment of the present Commission, the making of the aforesaid appropriation of two thousand dollars additional for contingent expenses, and authorizing procedure with the work.

Mr. G. P Riswold, the successful sculptor in the competition, associated with Messrs. James R. M. Morrison and Mr. Walker, architects, Chicago, Illinois, were notified of the action of the legislature. The following spring Mr Morrison of the firm of the sculptor and associated architects, being in Salt Lake City, and meeting with some members of the Commission volunteered the making of a larger model of the design submitted by Mr. Riswold. This model has been inspected by a spe-

cial committee appointed by the Utah State Commission and finally adopted by the full Commission as the accepted design and model of the monument to be erected on the Capitol grounds.

**Description of the Monument.**—The written report of Mr. Samuel C. Park, formerly mayor of Salt Lake City, made on behalf of the committee that went to Chicago to inspect the model, to the Utah State Mormon Battalion Commission—may well be taken for a description of the Mormon Battalion Monument that it is proposed to erect on the capitol grounds:

"To the Chairman of Members of the Mormon Battalion Monument Commission:

"As a member of your subcommittee delegated to go to Chicago to inspect the model of the proposed Mormon Battalion Monument, I have the honor to report :

" * * * The base is in triangular form with concave sides and rounded corners.

"A bronze figure of a Battalion man is mounted upon the front corner. Flanking him on two sides of the triangle are cut in high relief, on the left, the scene of the enlistment of the Battalion under the flag of the United States of America: on the right a scene of the march where the men are assisting in pulling the wagons of their train up and over a precipitous ascent while still others are ahead widening a cut to permit the passage of the wagons between the out-jutting rocks.

"The background is a representation of mountains of the character through which the Battalion and its train passed on the journey to the Pacific.

"Just below the peak in the center and in front of it is chiseled a beautiful head and upper part of a woman, symbolizing the 'Spirit of the West.' She personifies

the impulsive power and motive force that sustained these Battalion men and led them, as a vanguard of civilization, across the trackless plains and through the difficult defiles and passes of the mountains.

"The idea of the sculptor in the 'Spirit of the West' is a magnificent conception and should dominate the whole monument.

"The bronze figure of the battalion man is dignified, strong and reverential. He excellently typifies that band of pioneer soldiers which broke away through the rugged mountains and over trackless wastes.

"Hovering over and above him the beautiful female figure, with an air of solicitous care, guards him in his reverie. Her face stands out in full relief: the hair and diaphanous drapery waft back mingling with the clouds while the figure fades into dim outline in the massive peaks and mountains, seeming to pervade the air and the soil with her very soul.

"'The Spirit of the West' is but one of the many attributes of Deity symbolizing that Infinite Love and care which the Deity has for all his children and it represents the hope, courage, and determination which moved and impelled the Battalion Man, his comrades and all the others who have followed in their footsteps in the settlement and development of the great west.

"It is the Spirit back of the breaking of the soil by the farmer, back of the institution of our schools, back of our mines, back of our government and of our very hearthsides. It permeates the air, the soil and the hearts of men. It tempers the character of all who come within the influence of the boundless plains and majestic peaks. It has led men to make a garden of a desert and a treasure house of the mountain. It has justified and

approved every sacrifice to make this part of the world a better place in which to live. It is constant, never ending—infinite.

"It is pleasant to contemplate these thoughts as expressed in the model, at this time when the world is all but ovrcome with the idea of individualism, and while new governments, shifting as the sands, conceived in greed, envy and malice daily are born, struggle and die.

"Our proposed monument represents and commemorates such ideal in co-operation, steadfastness and progress as should be a lesson and an inspiration to this and to succeeding generations.

"The back of the monument has been most happily designed.

"It is the third side of the triangle and remains to be described.

"The central idea is the dimly suggested figure of an Indian woman, of the southwestern type, whose head shows in relief against the background peaks and whose body and outstretched arms draped in the customary blanket are faintly suggested in the crags and rocks. In fact the head is the only part of the figure that is chiseled clear in outline, the balance of the figure being only dimly suggested.

**Evanishment of Race.**—"Just as the 'Spirit of the West' in the front dominates and prevades, so this figure has the air of receding and disappearance. The evanishment of a former race. The figure is heroic in size and beautifully conceived. On either side, really on the lower folds of the blanket or on the rocks whereon the blanket is suggsted, are two more scenes incidental to the journey and labors of the battalion. On the right half is a scene at Sutter's mill where some of the battalion members

in digging the tailrace for the mill turned up the first gold bearing gravel that led to the great gold rush to California in "49,' and contributed so many millions to the wealth of the country,

"On the left half is shown a battalion man digging a ditch and leading the water from a creek to overflow the land so that the pioneers could break the ground that had shattered their plow poitns and broken their plows.

"This was the introduction of irrigation into Utah.

"The back of the monument in its conception and treatment, by its stateliness and suggested grandeur and what the artists call 'atmosphere' made a distinct impression upon the committee and no changes or modifications were thought of nor suggested. It seemed a very happy solution of a difficult problem.

"From the irrigating stream and the tail-race of the mill it is designed to have small streams of flowing water forming a pool in the shape of a half moon at the rear and so arranged as to pass this water through to the other side to form two pools or lagoons on the front side of the monument.

"Immediately surrounding the monument the architects have laid out a pavement in red brick tile with a border of an Indian design. This dark tile will save the glare and dazzling reflection of the bright sun of our clear atmosphere upon a white granite monument.

"There are also graceful and symetrical walks, a granite coping and seats suitably located and arranged to give everyone ample opportunity for a casual or studied view of the monument and its parts.

"Beyond these walks and seats immediately around the monument, the pools, lagoon and walks are designed

to join in and harmonize with the rest of the capitol grounds.

"Nothing like this monument has ever been designed or built before. It is original and unique. Few states can boast the achievements such as are commemorated in this design. More than 72 years have elapsed since the battalion made its memorable march, and the most of its members have passed to the great beyond. So this monument should be built at once if we are to proceed according to first hand evidence and information and not according to more or less fanciful and legendary tales concerning them and their difficult journey.

"It is sufficiently creditable and glorifying to tell their history as it was and without adornment. The most important events are to be shown in bronze and stone upon this monument.

"Its execution will certainly tax the sculptor to his utmost, but I believe it is in thoroughly capable hands and when built will be one of the really great monuments of the United States. * * *

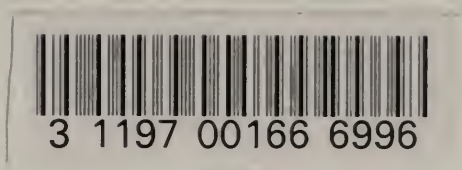
"Therefore, let us adhere to the proposed model with steadfast purpose to built it not only as an added attraction to the many we have for the tourist and visitor, but more especially as an object of great interest for study and inspiration for our children and our children's children."

**The Duty of the People of Utah.**—Such is the Monument to be erected in commemoration of this great march of infantry whose achievements are so closely and inseparably connected with winning for the United States her present inheritance in the intermountain west and on the shores of the Pacific. Also whose achievements and glory are so inseparably connected with the founding of

te State of Utah, as the work of part of her pioneer-state builders. It is the duty of the people of Utah, to whom appeal is now made, to raise the $100,000 necessary to make the State's appropriation of a like amount available to build the monument. To fail in such a duty would be to disgrance the State. No other State in the Union has such a unique incident to celebrate as this Battalion incident in our Utah Pioneer history. It is both heroic and dramatic; and in the results achieved is one of the largest events contributed by any state to the history of our country. Utah owes it to the state and to the nation to build this monument, that memory of this greatest march of infantry in the world, and the heroism of those who made it, shall not perish from among men

It is the purpose of the Utah State Mormon Battalion Monument Commission to raise this fund by the 30th day of January,1920,—Battalion Day—being the seventy-third anniversary of the official ending of their march, and arrival upon the shores of the Pacific. The respective counties have been organized for the campaign for the funds, subscription lists have been opened. It is proposed to conduct a campaign of public meetings in the interest of the Monument throughout Utah and the surrounding states, and give the people of the inter-mountain west every opportunity to honor themselves and their posterity and their state by fittingly memoralizing the March and Achievements of the Mormon Battalion.

The Mormon Battalion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